

Canadian the Kwik Way

BY SHELLEY ROBINSON

Right now either Asis or Amita Basu is probably behind the counter working.

Their store, Jerry's Kwik Way, is open 14 hours a day, seven days a week. The store is less than a kilometre away from Pier 21 — the new museum recognizing the one million,

mostly European, immigrants who came through the port to start new lives in Canada.

The Basus and their 17 year-old daughter Ayesha came to Halifax three years ago from Calcutta, India.

"I didn't know life in Canada would be so hard," Amita says. "What you make is nothing. You just work hard and pay your bills."

Her husband agrees. But both say they are glad they came and plan to stay.

"Most of the people who come to Canada, they don't come for the money, they come for a better life," he says. And Asis says he likes how easygoing Canada is.

"If Jean Chretien passes by I can say 'Hey, Jean. How are you doing?' That's really something."

They came by chance, answering an ad in a newspaper. "I was looking for a quiet life," Asis says. They also came for Ayesha's education.

Asis had once been accepted to the University of Washington to do his Ph.D in statistics. He couldn't go for money and family reasons.

"So I thought 'why not my daughter?'" he says. "I have only one child."

Amita, who has a degree in psychology from Bombay University, says Ayesha wants to be a doctor. Asis says being a doctor is okay, but there's a growing demand for computer technicians. They both say the education in North America is easier and more practical.

When they first arrived, Asis worked at his brother-in-law's Esso station. Amita was a school lunch monitor. Then they had a store in Dartmouth's North End called Asis' Variety. Amita



Amita Basu behind the counter at Jerry's Kwikway

says it was a rough neighbourhood with lots of shoplifting. They sold the store, and on May 1, 1998 they bought Jerry's.

After looking for a year they finally moved right next door to the Inglis St. Store because it was more convenient.

The store is open from nine in the morning till 11 at night and they are the only two employees.

But Asis says even though they can't afford to hire anyone outside the family, being small has its advantages.

"People like to come here because we smile and be nice to them. If I hire a person, they're always looking at the clock saying 'when can I leave?'"

In 45 minutes on a Sunday night Jerry's has 27 customers.

Amita smiles and makes small talk with all of them and recognizes at least half.

They have plans to sell the store and go into real estate or maybe their own gas station.

"We know that for a few years you have to work hard," Amita says.

"But once you are settled you don't have to work like this."

Spam, spam and more spam

E-mail advertising invades inboxes everywhere

BY DONNA LEE

The titles invade your e-mail inbox every day: "Great New Book - Male Sexual Secrets"; "Lose 30 pounds in 30 days, GUARANTEED"; "Secret Flaw In The World Currency Market!!!" The messages are as annoying as the flyers you get with your postal mail.

In fact, unsolicited junk e-mail (commonly known as spam) is just like flyers and bulk postal mail. Only electronic. And more abundant.

Over the last five years, the Internet and the World Wide Web have grown exponentially, and the amount of e-mail advertising has increased accordingly. For individual Internet users, this growth translates to more spam in your inbox.

Spam is any e-mail you did not ask for, but got, from advertisers who want to sell you something. These advertisers (called spammers) get email addresses by going through mailing lists, bulletin boards, newsgroups and guestbook entries. Some major web sites pick up visitors' email addresses to include on an advertising mailing list. And some Internet service providers sell their list of client-data to third parties for advertising purposes.

Despite the recent explosion of spam, people are getting used

to it.

"Most people have sort of accepted it," said Graham Perkins of the University Computing and Information Services (UCIS) Help Desk.

So far this year, the Help Desk has not received many spam-related complaints from Dalhousie Internet users.

But the university is jumping on the e-mail spam problem on two fronts, before it becomes a problem. The first, which deals with open-mail relays, doesn't have anything to do with individual student and staff accounts. But the second front, however, is familiar to anyone who uses the Internet: how to deal with incoming spam.

The first solution is dealt with by the Communications Services department. Dan MacKay, manager of the Network Operations Centre, says that Dalhousie has been aware of spam's existence since the university started engineering and running the Internet in Nova Scotia in 1989. His charge is preventing third-party open-mail relays. These occur when a third party (like a spammer) uses Dal's e-mail servers to send e-mail to other people while, at the same time, concealing the original sender's identity. To prevent third-party relays, MacKay's department ensures that the "mail relay software" is updated — a task that

is repeated several times a year. As well, various filters are installed so that outside parties can't abuse Dal's mail servers to send e-mail to other places.

Then there is the second and more popular part of the spam problem: Dalhousie users getting unsolicited e-mail in their inboxes.

MacKay says it's difficult to install an "incoming spam blocker" because no one can predict the origin or content of spam. That means there's no way MacKay can block spam without blocking legitimate mail.

"Some users may object to a central organization arbitrarily blocking email addressed to them," said MacKay.

In the end, frustrated users are encouraged to use individual e-mail filters designed to sort wanted e-mail from the junk. IS2, Dal's student email server, can use a filter program called *procmail* with Pine.

Aidan Evans, assistant director of Computer Facilities and Operations, adds that there's nothing preventing Dalhousie students and staff from sending spam of their own. "Nevertheless," Evans says, "just because it's possible doesn't mean it's OK. Sending spam is a violation of Dalhousie's Guide to Responsible Computing and thus could result in sanctions." Since administrators can't prevent users from sending

spam, it's up to users to be considerate of others and to report any spam sent from Dal.

Some Internet users might be lucky and not get much unwanted mail in their Dalhousie Internet accounts. But then, they could log into Microsoft's Hotmail and get deluged with spam! Hotmail and other free Web-based email services are likely to attract as much, if not more, junk e-mail as any other Internet service.

In the free e-mail market, some web sites are offering "spam-free" email. One service, called MsgTo.com, eliminates spam by initially blocking all of your incoming mail. Sounds great, but how can you get the e-mail you want?

When an actual sender (like a friend or family member) wants

Detecting SPAM mail from real mail



- Most of the time you can easily tell what e-mail is worth junking by looking at the subject line of a message. However, with spammers using more creative tactics in getting your attention, you might get duped into reading unwanted mail. Here are some additional things to seek: In the subject of a message, check for numbers in parentheses, for example, "This is Adult Material (24630)".

- Look at the sender's address. If you 'on't know who it is, or if the sender is unknown, chances are you don't want to know who it is.

- Most spam mail is not personalized. If you get a message that was sent to a whole bunch of other people, or the recipient is not your address, or if there is no recipient list, consider yourself spammed.

to send mail to your MsgTo.com account, that person gets a 'virtual test' from the MsgTo.com system. If the sender 'passes' the test, the message will go to your inbox and the sender won't be tested again. Meanwhile, spam is sent by bulk e-mail programs, and such programs are not designed to pass MsgTo.com's virtual test. The spam goes to a separate folder, not your inbox.

Sounds too good to be true? MsgTo.com does have a catch: the site will have their own advertisements to "help support the system."

In the end, the best way to avoid spam frustration is to rely on your brain and your delete key.

"It's a little annoying, but it's the easiest way," said Evans. "It really takes human intelligence to tell what is junk mail."