

Problems with “blocked” e-mail

Please note that this HelpSheet is designed to help you understand a problem that sometimes occurs and to guide you towards a solution. There are many different e-mail applications available on PCs, and many editions / versions of these. This guide should help you, but it is **not guaranteed** to give you all the information that you might need for any specific case.

- **The Problem**

- It can happen that when you attempt to send an e-mail you receive an error message that implies that your own mail server (that is mail.<yourdomainname>) is blocking you.
- The error message may contain the term **XBL** or an error code of **550**.
- In these circumstances the problem may be that your **IP address is blocked** on one of the many **blocklists**.
- However - **firstly**, check that you have **outgoing server requires authentication** ticked in the account set-up. (See **HelpSheet #1 - E-Mail**.)

- **What's an IP address?**

- This is the internet address of your computer. Your **ISP** (Internet Service Provider) normally allocates this. Your ISP is usually the organisation that you buy your broadband service from, for example - BT. Your IP address will be something like 86.180.61.83, that is - 4 numbers, each between 0 & 255, separated by full-stops.

- **How can I find out my IP address?**

- There are a number of ways.
 - One easy way is to go to the front page of the John Adams website at <http://www.marketingnorthants.co.uk/>. Your IP address is shown near the bottom of the page.

- **Who blocklists it and why?**

- Various blocklists exist, for example - **Spamhaus**. They may add your IP to their list if they believe it has been used to send **spam**, or “junk mail”.

- **What can I do?**

- If you have sent any mailings that may be, or be interpreted to be, spam, then you need to look on the web at organisations like Spamhaus. You can then follow their procedures for unblocking.
- If you have **not** sent anything like spam, then it is likely that you have unfortunately and unwittingly inherited a spammers IP. This happens because many ISPs provide **dynamic IP**. That is, they allocate their physical routing equipment as and when needed. If you keep your broadband hub or router permanently switched on, your IP is unlikely to change whilst your computer is in use. If the computer is idle for some time, then your IP may change. If you switch the router off and then back on later, then the chances are that your IP will be different. If the previous user of the IP sent spam, then you now “own” the offending IP! The simple solution is to stop actively using your PC - you may want to put it in “sleep” mode. Switch off the hub / router, leave for a few minutes, then switch on again and let it stabilise to showing the usual lights, etc. Then recommence computing, find out your new IP address and retry your e-mail.