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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF KING

MICROSOFT CORPORATION, a  
Washington corporation,  
  
Plaintiff,  
  
v.  
  
THE E-OFFER STORE, a foreign  
corporation; and JOHN DOES 1-20,  
  
Defendants.

No. **03-2-27985-4 SEA**  
COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND  
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

Plaintiff Microsoft Corporation ("Microsoft") brings this action against THE E-OFFER STORE and JOHN DOES 1-20.

**I. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

1. This is an action for trespass to chattels, conversion, and for violations of the Washington Commercial Electronic Mail Act (RCW Ch. 19.190), the Washington Consumer Protection Act, and the federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)). Microsoft seeks damages and injunctive relief to remedy defendants' unauthorized use of Microsoft's computers and computer systems to send millions of misleading and deceptive unsolicited commercial e-mail messages, or "spam," in violation of Microsoft's policies and state and federal law.



1 knowledge of those actions, provided assistance and benefited from those actions, in whole or  
2 in part. Each of the defendants was the agent of each of the remaining defendants, and in  
3 doing the things hereinafter alleged, was acting within the course and scope of such agency  
4 and with the permission and consent of other defendants.

5 **III. NATURE OF PLAINTIFF'S INTERNET E-MAIL SERVICES**

6 8. Microsoft owns and operates interactive computer services that enable its  
7 customers to, among other things, access the Internet and exchange electronic mail ("e-mail")  
8 on the Internet. Microsoft owns and maintains computers and other equipment, including  
9 specialized computers or "servers" that process e-mail messages and otherwise support its e-  
10 mail services. Microsoft maintains this equipment in Washington and California, among  
11 other states. E-mail sent to and from Microsoft's customers is processed through and stored  
12 on these computers. Microsoft is an internet service provider ("ISP"), is an "interactive  
13 computer service" as defined by RCW § 19.190.010. Microsoft's computers and computer  
14 systems are "protected computers" during the federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, 18  
15 U.S.C. § 1030(e)(2).

16 9. One of Microsoft's services is "MSN Hotmail" which provides free and  
17 subscription-based e-mail on the Internet through a web-based e-mail service that can be  
18 accessed at [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com). MSN Hotmail allows account-holders to exchange e-mail  
19 messages with any other e-mail user who has an Internet e-mail address throughout the world.  
20 MSN Hotmail has millions of registered accounts, whose users all have unique e-mail  
21 addresses ending in "@hotmail.com."

22 10. Another of Microsoft's services is "MSN Internet Access" (referred to herein  
23 as "MSN") which provides free and subscription-based e-mail services that can be accessed  
24 on the web or via Microsoft's proprietary network. MSN allows account-holders to exchange  
25 e-mail messages with any other e-mail user who has an Internet e-mail address throughout the  
26

1 world. MSN has millions of registered accounts, whose users all have unique e-mail  
2 addresses ending in "@msn.com."

3 **IV. THE NATURE OF UNSOLICITED E-MAIL OR "SPAM"**

4 11. Unsolicited commercial e-mail is often referred to as "spam." The  
5 transmission of spam, a practice referred to as "spamming," by persons known as  
6 "spammers," is widely condemned in the Internet community, and is of significant concern  
7 and economic detriment to Microsoft and its customers.

8 12. By using the Internet to send commercial e-mail messages, spammers not only  
9 obtain significant cost savings, but impose significant economic burdens on ISPs such as  
10 Microsoft. Although it costs very little for a spammer to transmit innumerable e-mail  
11 messages, handling the enormous volume of e-mail initiated by spammers places a  
12 tremendous burden on Microsoft.

13 13. Microsoft's computers and computer systems are designed and created solely  
14 for the benefit and the non-commercial personal use of its customers. The computers and  
15 computer systems have finite capacity and are not designed to accommodate innumerable  
16 mass mailings from spammers. Microsoft has been required to expend substantial amounts  
17 for new equipment to handle the mass mailings by spammers.

18 14. Spamming also can and does result in the degradation and disruption of  
19 Microsoft's computers and computer systems. Spam demands storage space and processing  
20 capacity of Microsoft's computers and computer systems, making those resources unavailable  
21 to serve the legitimate needs of Microsoft's customers. The diversion of these resources from  
22 processing authorized e-mail impairs the normal operation of the computers and computer  
23 systems. Therefore, the value of that equipment is diminished by spamming.

24 15. Spamming also has significant impact on the recipients of spam. Individuals  
25 who receive spam must take the time and effort to sort through larger volumes of received e-  
26 mail, must attempt to distinguish spam from legitimate e-mail, and ultimately discard this

1 unsolicited material. In an effort to mislead e-mail recipients and to make it more difficult for  
2 them to identify and discard these unsolicited advertisements, spammers frequently use  
3 deceptive methods, such as using a false or misleading information in the e-mail headers and  
4 subject lines. When a spammer uses deceptive information to disguise spam as legitimate  
5 personal or business e-mail, it causes additional inconvenience and frustration to spam  
6 recipients.

7 16. Spam frequently involves products or services of questionable value, or  
8 materials of an adult or pornographic nature. Unsolicited advertisements for such products or  
9 services, often disguised, are a particularly obtrusive form of spam and are often the subject of  
10 customer complaints.

11 17. Spammers know that their bulk e-mailing practices inevitably lead to a  
12 significant portion of their e-mail being undeliverable. When an e-mail message is  
13 undeliverable, additional e-mail messages (“bounce-back messages”) are generated to advise  
14 the sender and the ISP of this fact. Rather than have their own computer equipment burdened  
15 with voluminous bounce-back messages, spammers craft their messages to direct the bounce-  
16 back messages to others. Thus, a spammer who sends spam by using a MSN or MSN  
17 Hotmail return address can be assured that the inevitable, innumerable bounce-back messages  
18 will be returned to that address, not to the spammer’s own computer system. This adds to  
19 Microsoft’s burdens, as its computers must process and store the bounce-back messages from  
20 these spam mailings.

21 18. In an attempt to protect itself and its customers from spam, Microsoft has  
22 expended significant resources to developing technologies and practices to prevent its  
23 subscribers from sending or receiving spam. Spammers, however, continue to adopt practices  
24 and technological devices to evade Microsoft’s technologies and to frustrate Microsoft’s  
25 efforts.

1           19.     In passing the Commercial Electronic Mail Act, RCW Ch. 19.190, in 1998,  
2 Washington became one of the first states to regulate spam. The legislature has recognized  
3 that the spamming practices prohibited by the Act are “matters vitally affecting the public  
4 interests” and are unfair and deceptive practices which impact Washington businesses and  
5 consumers.

6           20.     Microsoft has invested substantial time and money in efforts to disassociate  
7 itself from spam and the spammers who promote and profit from spam, as well as in seeking  
8 to protect its registered users worldwide from receiving spam.

9           21.     Microsoft has a clearly articulated policy prohibiting the use of its services for  
10 junk email, spamming, or any unsolicited messages (commercial or otherwise). Microsoft’s  
11 policies also prohibit automated queries of any sort, harvesting or collection of e-mail  
12 addresses, and any use of the services that is not personal and non-commercial. These  
13 policies are included in the Terms of Use for MSN and MSN Hotmail, which can be accessed  
14 via a clearly marked link on [www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com), as well as on the home pages for each of the  
15 services.

16                                   **V. DEFENDANTS’ UNLAWFUL CONDUCT**

17           22.     Microsoft is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that defendants  
18 have been—and are currently involved in—widespread spamming by sending misleading,  
19 deceptive, and unsolicited commercial email to MSN Hotmail account holders.

20           23.     Microsoft is informed and believes, and on the basis alleges, that its MSN  
21 Hotmail service has received millions of unsolicited e-mail messages from defendants.

22           24.     Many of the messages sent by defendants contain false or misleading subject  
23 line. Examples include, but are not limited to, “re: Is this you??,” “Re: Your Ongoing Legal  
24 Representation,” “re: I have been looking for you!,” “Re: Job offer – Contact Us Today!,” “re:  
25 We Have Been Trying to Reach You!,” “re: Your NEW Car Loan Is Approved!”  
26





1 **COUNT IV**  
2 **(Violation of the federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act – 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(4), (g))**

3 39. Microsoft realleges and incorporates by this reference each and every  
4 allegation set forth in paragraphs 1 through 38 above.

5 40. By the actions alleged above, defendants knowingly and with intent to defraud,  
6 accessed Microsoft's protected computer system, without authorization and/or in excess of  
7 authorized access.

8 41. By the actions alleged above, defendants furthered the intended fraud and  
9 obtained unauthorized use of Microsoft's protected computer system, and the value of that use  
10 exceeds more than \$5,000 in any 1-year period.

11 42. Defendants' activity constitutes a violation of the federal Computer Fraud and  
12 Abuse Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(4), and Microsoft is entitled to damages under that Act.  
13 Microsoft is also entitled under the Act to injunctive and equitable relief against defendants.

14 **COUNT V**  
15 **(Violation of the federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act – 18 U.S.C. §1030(a)(5), (g))**

16 43. Microsoft realleges and incorporates by this reference each and every  
17 allegation set forth in paragraphs 1 through 42 above.

18 44. By the actions alleged above, defendants intentionally and knowingly accessed  
19 Microsoft's protected computer system, and knowingly caused the transmission of a program,  
20 information, code, or command, without authorization and/or in excess of authorized access.

21 45. By the actions alleged above, defendants intentionally caused damage, without  
22 authorization, to Microsoft's protected computer system, and the aggregate loss resulting  
23 therefrom exceeds at least \$5,000 in value.

24 46. Defendants' activity constitute a violation of the federal Computer Fraud and  
25 Abuse Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(5), and Microsoft is entitled to damages under that Act.  
26 Microsoft is also entitled under the Act to injunctive and equitable relief against defendants.

1 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

2 WHEREFORE, Microsoft respectfully requests that the Court enter judgment against  
3 defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

4 1. That the Court issue temporary and permanent injunctive relief against  
5 defendants, and that defendants, their officers, agents, representatives, servants, employees,  
6 attorneys, successors and assignees, and all others in active concert or participation with  
7 defendants, be enjoined and restrained from:

8 a) establishing any accounts with Microsoft's MSN or MSN Hotmail  
9 services;

10 b) using Microsoft's computers and computer systems in connection with  
11 sending commercial e-mail messages;

12 c) making unauthorized use of Microsoft's computers and computer  
13 systems;

14 d) continuing to violate Microsoft's Terms of Service;

15 e) continuing to violate the Washington Commercial Electronic Mail Act;

16 f) assisting, aiding, or abetting any other person or business entity in  
17 engaging in or performing any of the activities referred to in subparagraphs a) through  
18 e) above.

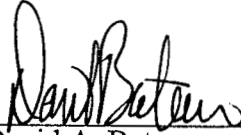
19 2. That the Court award Microsoft actual damages, liquidated damages and  
20 statutory damages, in amount to be proven at trial;

21 3. That the Court award Microsoft its attorneys' fees and costs incurred herein;  
22 and

23 4. That the Court grant Microsoft such other or additional relief as is just and  
24 proper.  
25  
26

1 DATED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2003.

2 PRESTON GATES & ELLIS LLP

3  
4 By   
5 David A. Bateman, WSBA # 14262  
6 Robert J. Dzielak, WSBA #26178  
7 Theodore J. Angelis, WSBA #30300

8 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
9 Microsoft Corporation  
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