

Handling Spam Calls

Facilitation Guide

Guide your learners to combatting and defeating spam calls once and for all.

Overview

This module introduces to learners to best practices for managing and dealing with spam calls.

For more information, be sure to watch Series 3 training videos from NYC Digital Safety.

Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Describe spam calls
- Name different features of spam calls
- Use best practices for handling spam calls

Format + Time Frame

This module provides an overview of spam calls and a how-to guide for handling and managing spam calls.

This module will take approximately 35 to 40 minutes to complete. You can combine this module with others for a longer learning experience.

Materials

- Slide deck
- Facilitation guide

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- Handout

Lesson Plan

Activity	Materials	Time Needed
Introduction and welcome Greet learners and review the plan for this module.	Slides 1 through 2	2 minutes
Defining and discussing spam calls Provide a brief definition of spam calls and see if anyone has questions or anything to add. Open a discussion and ask your learners to share their experiences with spam calls.	Slides 3 and 4	10 minutes
Spam call types and features Review different signs of spam calls, including clues that can appear via the caller and via the type of call. Pause to see if anyone has anything else to add.	Slides 5 and 6	10 minutes
Handling spam calls Review the list of actions to take before, during, and after receiving a spam call. Pause after each slide to see if anyone has anything else to add.	Slides 7 through 9	10 minutes
Reflecting on spam calls and digital security connections	Slide 10	3 minutes

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Share some thoughts on how overall digital security and safety best practices can help you deal with spam calls.		
Wrap up, final tips, and final questions Review the closing thoughts and share the suggested resources. See if anyone has any final questions.	Slides 11 through 14, Handout	5 minutes

Considerations

Spam calls are an issue that are gaining increased attention. Americans received billions of spam calls last year and they are increasingly annoying, time-consuming, and even stressful to handle. Consider leaving time for your learners to share their own experiences with spam calls here.

For an additional activity, you could even ask your learners to share some recent examples of spam calls that they've received. Feel free to customize and include examples from your own learners for this module.

Options and Variations

This module pairs well with other modules on phones, particularly the module on identifying scam calls, as well as modules on phishing schemes and scams more generally. You could consider running a joint workshop or a workshop series that covers different phone issues, including scam calls and scam texts here.

You can also provide this information and content to patrons via a service point by sharing the handout form this module with them, as well as the handout on spoofed numbers and on identifying scam calls.

Assessment

The following are some suggested assessment questions that you can use and adapt for your own purposes. These questions can help you assess various things, including knowledge retention, personal views and preferences, and concept application.

You might consider asking these as a pre or post test, or you can have learners answer these as part of an exit survey or a follow-up survey. Keep reading for suggested questions and an answer key with further details and explanations.

Questions for Participants

What are some approaches that you can use to handle spam calls? Select all that apply.

- A. Screen unknown callers with voicemail
- B. Answer calls from local numbers since these aren't spam
- C. Block spam callers' numbers
- D. Answer and tell the spammer to stop calling you

True or false: Many wireless carriers offer free tools to filter and block spam calls.

- A. True
- B. False

The Do Not Call List stops which group from calling you:

- A. Telemarketers
- B. Charities
- C. Political groups
- D. Scammers

Do you feel that you get an excessive amount of spam calls?

- A. Yes
- B. No

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C. Unsure

Answer Key

What are some approaches that you can use to handle spam calls? Select all that apply.

Answer: A, Screen unknown callers with voicemail; C, Block spam callers' numbers

Answering spam calls is rarely a good idea. It's better to screen and attempt to avoid engaging with any sort of spam call, since that can put your personal information at risk. Local numbers can also still be spam calls due to spoofing, which is where a number is concealed in order to trick someone.

True or false: Many wireless carriers offer free tools to filter and block spam calls.

Answer: A, True

This is true! Increasingly, wireless carriers like Verizon and AT&T are offering tools to customers to help them screen and block spam calls.

The Do Not Call List stops which group from calling you:

Answer: A, Telemarketers

This list stops telemarketers from contacting you, but it isn't completely foolproof and there are groups, like charities, that it won't necessarily stop. And scammers and spammers don't usually bother abiding by official lists like this. However, this list is a good way to put a stop to other kinds of nuisance calls.

Do you feel that you get an excessive amount of spam calls?

Opinion question that can be used to generate discussion before a workshop

Connections to Other Modules

This module connects to many other modules. The following suggestions provide opportunities for exploration, connection, and potential programming. However, feel free to explore and make connections between other modules not listed here as well!

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1.1 Phishing Schemes

1.3 Social Media Account Hacks

3.1 Identifying Scam Calls

3.1 Spoofed Numbers

3.2. Identifying Email and Text Spam

3.2 Dealing with Scammers

3.2 Managing SMS Settings

These and other modules can be found at this project's website, nycdigitalsafety.org.

About This Project

These materials were released in October 2022 as part of NYC Digital Safety: Privacy & Security.

NYC Digital Safety: Privacy & Security is a partnership between New York City's three library systems — Brooklyn Public Library, The New York Public Library, and Queens Library — and METRO Library Council. With support from the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation, this project ensures that NYC residents can rely on public libraries for their questions about internet privacy and security.

Visit nycdigitalsafety.org for more information.