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April 16, 2008

Colorado Tourism Office
1625 Broadway, Suite 2700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Colorado Tourism Office:

As a concerned citizen of Colorado, I was recently surprised to discover that your "Let's Talk Colorado" vacation giveaway is being promoted by flooding the Internet with unsolicited mass email known as "spam". Because spam transmission is largely an endeavor of con artists, scammers, and criminals, I am worried about how this activity will taint the reputation of our state. I have started an investigation into this matter, so that stakeholders and interested parties can take the appropriate action to restore Colorado's good standing.

Spam is a serious problem on the Internet, as it not only decreases the usefulness of email with tens or hundreds of unwanted messages for every legitimate message, but it creates an unreasonable burden on our networks. Unlike junk mail sent through the postal service, spam does not contribute financially to the email infrastructure. As a software engineer who has developed email systems, I can attest that the majority of money and effort allocated to email services is spent on processing and filtering spam.

Over the past four months, I have received no fewer than fifteen unsolicited email messages promoting your vacation giveaway. These messages have been carefully crafted and sent using a variety of shady techniques in an attempt to bypass spam filters and avoid responsibility. My guess is that the Colorado Tourism Office has, with the best of intentions, hired a third party to help promote tourism and market the giveaway. This third party has taken it upon themselves to resort to spam, or has provided poor guidance to the Colorado Tourism Office with regards to the nature of such activity.

I have attached a copy of the most recent giveaway message I have received. The shady techniques employed by these mailings include the following:

1. Fifteen (15) such messages have been sent to my mailbox. If the message was legitimate, surely

one would suffice.

2. The URLs (web addresses) to which recipients are encouraged to visit change in every message. All of these URLs redirect to the letstalkcolorado.com web site. By using this method to disguise the address of the final web site, the senders hope to prevent spam filters from using the URL to filter the messages. These disguised URLs include the following:

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http://court.daytongroup.net/7191uzH7388k07061OCS33Cihb51mxclT180Cx101BhfA
http://thru.mahongroup.net/58317QmKYv781yckl772523typAY67p51icm067BA101Avz
http://ww.madsenassociates.net/8929EM78171cyk72523LEa67Idrie5138MLET9OUYXU101MBxKo
http://ww.rivellinogroup.net/6s1D7388yclk07061Yz33t1r480sYnaz51YUrA101WJMY
http://ww.topelgroup.net/2156XBNB7381k807061kUo33dnfy498dHNA41prdg101FmBCZ
http://www10.eagermangroup.com/54GEBXC78177lyck2523WwL67Zf544oGdx96AeWA102POQ
http://www2.shermansgroup.com/65n7817725123Y67Sc5409X6ul021Ax
http://www.ashlandassociates.net/140Veix7388070k61OGDOa33DV5A0233ad101rIgsK
http://www.eagermangroup.com/17843s7817725ky23iS67ATvK5Xa3282ePaya101j
http://www.eagermangroup.com/72711VZ78177252kyl3I67oPnPF53w282ku103Ye
http://www.kretzgroup.com/21FBG73ylck8807061ocsHO33VMf5CDgwl1750xOTG101fPZrJ
http://www.lakeviewassociates.com/310qEW738807c1y061I33qgFZ49guDF455xP101Qmz
http://www.lakeviewassociates.net/7173nS7yck38807061133MZU50T457qJh101Py1Un
http://www.topelgroup.com/127aZCQo73cyk8807061cwY33ELE4GB7902edBrT101d
http://www.topelgroup.net/90oj73880ykl7061Qo33rCE5084KuOWR6G101gEJ
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Notice how many different domain names are employed to help with the disguise.

3. A gratuitous space has been inserted into the word “unsubscribe” to make it look like “uns ubscribe”. This is a another technique spammers use to avoid being blocked, as many spam filters will consider the presence of the word “unsubscribe” when judging if a message is spam.
4. Perhaps the most disturbing behavior, and a technique shared by many con artists, is the suspicious nature of the postal addresses supplied in the messages. These addresses use a series of mailboxes to give the impression of a legitimate business, while covering up their actual physical location. Additionally, this marketing company feels the need to change their name every so often. Names and addresses referenced in the messages I received include the following:

The alleged name and address:	What the address actually is:
Tiger Media Solutions 1341 W FULLERTON AVE CHICAGO, IL 60614	The UPS Store # 2203 (A supplier of private mailboxes.)
Premier Digital Media 2303 RANDALL RD CARPENTERSVILLE, IL 60110 - USA	The UPS Store # 4294 (A supplier of private mailboxes.)
C 2 C 3024 N Ashland Ave #223 Chicago, IL 60657	This is a USPS post office located in a strip mall. There is no actual “suite 223” here, much less an office building.

Please look into how this underhanded marketing is taking place. I love Colorado, and I hate to see our name tarnished by negative publicity such as spam. If the Colorado Tourism Office is the victim of some sort of scam involving these mailouts, then appropriate legal action should be taken against the perpetrators. If a hired third party is responsible, business with them should cease. If there is some justification for why these messages should not be considered spam, I would love to hear it, but it would take some convincing after seeing how these people behave as if they are criminals – engaging in misdirection, changing names, changing addresses, etc. Please provide some reassurance so I don't have to pursue this matter any further.

Sincerely,

David Simmons

Enclosure

From ColoradoTourismConfirmation@eagermangroup.com Mon Apr 14 19:36:12 2008
Return-path: <ColoradoTourismConfirmation@eagermangroup.com>
Delivery-date: Mon, 14 Apr 2008 19:36:12 -0600
Received: from www10.eagermangroup.com ([66.97.176.115])
by tardis.nu with esmtp (Exim 4.43)
id 1Jla5k-0000fB-Pa
for simmons@davidsimmons.com; Mon, 14 Apr 2008 19:36:12 -0600
Message-ID: <515.402612849345@www10.eagermangroup.com>
From: "ColoradoTourismConfirmation" <ColoradoTourismConfirmation@eagermangroup.com>
To: "" <simmons@davidsimmons.com>
Subject: Colorado Vacation Confirmation
Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2008 20:36:12 -0500
Reply-To: "ColoradoTourismConfirmation" <ColoradoTourismConfirmation@eagermangroup.com>
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
Content-Length: 1706

Enter for your chance for 1 of 5 Colorado vacations.

Colorado Vacation Giveaway:

<http://www10.eagermangroup.com/54GEBXC78177lyck2523WwL67Zf544oGdx96AeWA102POQ>

Let's Talk Colorado

What Is A Singletrack?

A. The Name of a Music Group

B. One Railroad Track

C. A Mountain Biking Trail

(scroll down to see the correct answer.)

With so many unique things to see and do, Colorado's got a language all its own. So whether it's hiking a 14er, sampling the Rocky Mountain Oysters or making sure you don't look like a gumby when you're rock climbing, you'll find it here. Colorado has everything you need for the perfect summer getaway. You'll find everything you need to plan your trip at LetsTalkColorado.com. While you're there, get a FREE Let's Talk Colorado t-shirt. Choose from 12 unique designs and your t-shirt will be waiting to be picked up at any of the nine official Colorado Welcome Centers.

Enter for your chance for 1 of 5 Colorado vacations.

Colorado Vacation Giveaway: <http://www10.eagermangroup.com/54GEBXC78177lyck2523WwL67Zf544oGdx96AeWA102POQ>

ANSWER: C.

Dude! It's a narrow mountain biking trail just wide enough for one cyclist. Singletacks wiggle and twist throughout Colorado's terrain; it's a mountain biker's paradise. Learn more about Colorado's mountain biking trails at LetsTalkColorado.com.

If you would like to unsubscribe from e-mails from Colorado please click here:

<http://www10.eagermangroup.com/3h078177c2523BPkV67uQi5449v6t101DTY1j>

Colorado Tourism Office | 1625 Broadway, Suite 2700 | Denver, CO 80202

List Registration Options: <http://www10.eagermangroup.com/5552rf781772en523P67TY5449CFJW61few>

C 2 C

3024 N Ashland Ave #223

Chicago, IL 60657