

Internet Topics: Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group

■ About MAAWG

With global spam on the increase, IJ was among the 19 international telecommunications carriers and ISPs who established MAAWG (Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group)*¹ on January 19, 2004*². As a founding member of MAAWG, IJ has participated in MAAWG activities for the past five years. Here we will introduce the details of MAAWG activities and present a summary of the 16th General Meeting held in June, 2009.

MAAWG members include a variety of companies involved with email, such as major ISPs, ESPs (Email Service Providers), and email delivery contractors and vendors. As of the end of 2008, the number of members has risen to 161 companies. The main activities of MAAWG involve countermeasures against the unauthorized use of email to spread spam and viruses. In recent years, however, many issues such as countermeasures against botnets that are the source of such problems and the malware (unauthorized programs) behind these botnets have also become topics of discussion. As a result of its activities, MAAWG has published a variety of documents such as recommendations, best practices, and whitepapers. These are also made available to non-members, and can be obtained from the MAAWG Website.

A wide variety of companies involved with email currently participate as MAAWG members. Members participate in discussions covering a number of fields, such as the Technical Committee for discussing technical matters, the Collaboration Committee for discussing operational issues, and the Public Policy Committee that carries out activities such as coordination with law enforcement agencies and international organizations. Another characteristic of MAAWG is the variety of discussions that are held based on a specific theme or on the role of participants, such as the Senders SIG for sender organizations or the ISP Closed Colloquium for which participation is limited to ISPs.

MAAWG members meet face-to-face at the General Meeting that is held three times each year, but in addition to this also share information and opinions on published documents on an everyday basis using a mailing list. An Abuse Contact Database has also been created so that members can contact each other directly, and this contributes to improving the international email environment through its use to confirm status when the transmission of email between ISPs is not going smoothly.

■ 16th MAAWG General Meeting

The General Meeting is a precious opportunity for MAAWG members to meet each other face-to-face. In recent years they have been held around February and October in North America, and in June in Europe. Here we will present the details of the 16th General Meeting held in Amsterdam in the Netherlands from June 8 to June 11.

When MAAWG was established there were open sessions in which anyone could participate, but currently only MAAWG members and invited guests can participate in the meeting. As making details of the meeting public is prohibited, we cannot discuss the details of each session, but we will present a summary.

The meeting held in Europe, partly due to it being the headquarters of international organizations such as the ITU and the OECD, tends to be higher participation from those involved in government. A large number of organizations were in attendance at this meeting, such as the Council of Europe and Europol, the United States FTC and the Netherlands OPTA (Independent Postal and Telecommunication Authority), with each presenting information about the initiatives they are undertaking. This year there was a record number of attendees for the meeting held in Europe, with over 270 individuals from 19 countries participating, demonstrating the high level of interest and also the seriousness of the issues faced in this field.

The General Meeting is normally held over three days, with sessions on a variety of topics continuing from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Most sessions are related to email, and as multiple sessions are held concurrently, participants spend most of the day cooped up in the hotel that serves as the meeting place. Social events are also held to cultivate friendships between members, and this is an opportunity to meet out of the hotel and discuss solutions to everyday problems and for collaborations between companies.

JEAG (Japan Email Anti-Abuse Group)*³, which counters spam e-mail abuse in Japan, was founded after the establishment of MAAWG. JEAG also coordinates with MAAWG, with JEAG members participating in MAAWG General Meetings as guests, and introducing JEAG's activities and initiatives in Japan. As a founding member of both, IJ will continue to be extremely active, serving as a bridge between Japan and international organizations.

Author:

Shuji Sakuraba

Shuji Sakuraba is a Senior Program Manager in the Service Promotion Section of the Messaging Service Division in IJ Network Service Department.



*1 <http://www.maawg.org/>

*2 <http://www.ij.ad.jp/news/pressrelease/2004/0119.html>

*3 <http://www.jeag.jp/>