

SPAMMERS

Oh God, Do You Have Mail.™

Introduction

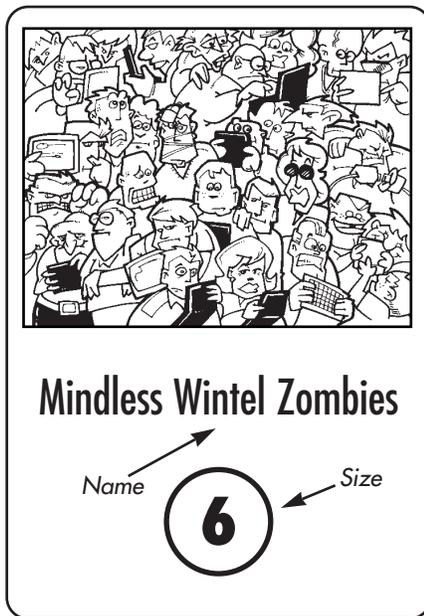
In SPAMMERS, you take the role of a wired entrepreneur trying to make a bundle of cash by publicizing a collection of Internet businesses. In real life, people who send "spam" (a slang term for junk e-mail) are insufferable jerks. Their computers belch out mountains of the stuff, filling mailboxes to overflowing, causing networks to go on the fritz, and irritating more enlightened Internet users. Here, it's all just good fun. Each player attempts to exploit the unfortunate masses of net.citizens to amass the greatest Internet empire by the end of the game.

Cards

There are two kinds of cards in SPAMMERS: List Cards and Action Cards.

List Cards represent the people to whom you will market your products and services. Each List Card has a Size, which tells you how many people are on that List.

Each List can also have any number of **Specialties**. Specialties represent subject matter which members of that List are known to be interested in. Possible Specialties are Adult, Internet Services, Get-Rich-Quick Schemes (GRQ), and Free Stuff. Specialties can change during play, and are represented by markers that are placed on the Lists they apply to. Lists that come into play with a Specialty (that is, those that have a Specialty marked directly on the card) should have the appropriate counter immediately placed on them, because starting Specialties can be subsequently lost or changed. No card may be Specialized more than once in the same category. For example, no list may ever have more than one Adult Specialty counter on it.



List Card



Specialty Counters

In the course of play, Lists can also accumulate Degeneration Counters. (Degeneration Counters are sometimes referred to as "Gruntles," because they represent the members of the List getting increasingly disgruntled. Cute, huh?) These counters effectively reduce the Size of the List they affect. For example, a List with a printed Size of 4 Million that has two Gruntles on it actually has a Size of 2 for all purposes, until such time as the number of Gruntles on the List changes.



Degeneration Counter (a.k.a. "Gruntle")

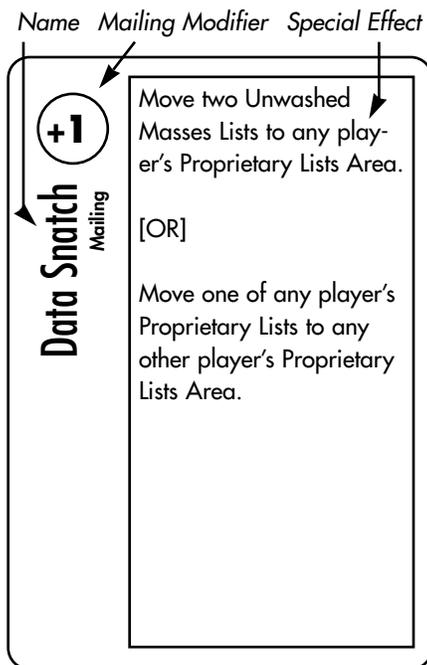
Action Cards come in three types: Scams, Mailings, and Hardware.

Scams are cards that represent the businesses you can operate. Each Scam has a category. Possible categories are Adult, Internet Services, Get-Rich-Quick Schemes (GRQ), Free Stuff, and Miscellaneous. Each Scam also has an Initial Rating, which represents how successful it is when it begins the game. Ratings can change through the course of play, though, so you should place a Rating Counter on each Scam as it is brought into play to indicate its current rating. Scams do not have a maximum Rating, but can never be reduced to lower than their Initial Rating.

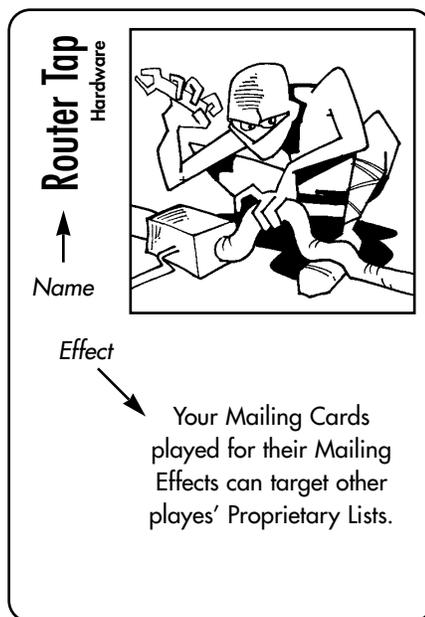


Scam Card

Mailings are cards you use in conjunction with Lists to increase the value of your Scams. Each Mailing card actually allows two options. The first is to target one of the Lists on the table for a mailing in hopes of increasing the value of one of your Scams (this is called using its Mailing Effect). The



Mailing Card



Hardware Card

other is to cause the effect described on the card (this is called using its Special Effect).

Hardware cards represent the computer equipment at your disposal. Each has a continuous special effect which is described on the card.

Set Up

To begin the game, shuffle the List Cards and Action Cards separately. Each player is dealt three List Cards and six Action Cards.

Next, each player must choose one of his or her three Lists and place it face up in the middle of the table. These are the starting Unwashed Masses Lists. Once all players have selected one List to place in the Unwashed Masses Area, deal a number of cards off of the top of the List Deck equal to the number of players into the Unwashed Masses Area. Each player places the rest of his or her initial Lists in his Proprietary Lists Area.

Keep the two decks (List and Action) separate during play. Some random method should be used to determine which player goes first.

The Table

A central area of the table should be designated the Unwashed Masses Area. Furthermore, each player has an area that is divided into three parts. The first part is that player's Hardware Area. The second is the player's Scam Area. The last is the player's Proprietary Lists Area. The actual arrangement of these areas is not important as long as everyone can keep track of whose cards are whose. You are allowed to smack any player who tries to mess with your cards, but don't blame us if the authorities intervene.

Play

Players take turns in order, going clockwise around the table. Players may not normally play cards when it is not their turn, save when a given card specifically states it may be played at any time.

On a player's turn, he or she may take zero, one, two, or three Actions. For each Action, the player has the following options.

Draw a Card. The player draws one Action Card or one List Card. If he or she draws an Action Card, it is placed in his or her hand.

If the player draws a List Card, there are two options. If the player is willing to reduce the Rating of one of his or her Scams by one, he or she may place the List in his or her own Proprietary Lists Area. If he or she is not willing to pay the price, the List is placed in the Unwashed Masses Area. List Cards are never held in a player's hand.

No player may have more than nine cards in his or her hand at any time. If drawing a card would put more than nine cards in a player's hand, he or she may not draw a card. (It is extremely rare for a player to be in a position where his hand has nine cards in it and none of them are playable. If that occurs, the player is allowed to discard Scams in order to draw new cards. Refer to "Scams," under "Playing Action Cards," below, for more information.)

If either the Action Deck or the List Deck are ever depleted during the course of play, the appropriate discard pile should be shuffled and used to form a new deck.

Play a Card. The player may elect to play a single Action Card from his or her hand. Exactly what happens next depends on what sort of card it is. The different possibilities are described under "Playing Action Cards," below.

Merge Lists. The player may either merge two of his or her Proprietary Lists together or merge two Unwashed Masses Lists together. This is done by placing the two cards on top of each other so that only the Ratings are visible, and placing any Specialties and Gruntles on top of the joined List. From now on, that List counts as a single List for all purposes, and the Size of the List is equal to the sum of the Lists forming it, minus the number of Gruntles on it. For example, if a List of Size 6 and one Gruntle was merged with a List of Size 3 and two Gruntles, the resulting List would have an effective Size of 6 (6 + 3 - 1 - 2).

Once a player's turn is over, the next player begins his or her turn.

Playing Action Cards

There are three types of Action Cards, and, in a celebration of diversity, each is played in its own way.

Scams. To place a new Scam into play, a player simply takes the card from his hand, announces what it is, and places it in his or her Scam Area. A Rating counter equal to the Scam's Initial Rating is immediately placed on it, if its rating is higher than zero. That Scam may be used in play on this turn.

No player may normally have more than five Scams in play at any time, so a player with five Scams in play may not play an additional Scam. A player with five Scams in play may, if he wishes, use an Action to discard a Scam and draw a card (the player must choose the discard before drawing). This is the only time discards are allowed in SPAMMERS.

Mailings. When playing a Mailing, the player first announces how that Mailing will be used.

If the player is using it for its Special Effect, the instructions on the card are followed and the card is discarded afterwards.

If the player is using it for its Mailing Effect, he or she announces which Scam he or she owns is initiating the Mailing and which List is the target of the Mailing. The target List must normally be one of the player's Proprietary Lists or one of the Lists from the Unwashed Masses Area.

A six-sided die will eventually be rolled to determine the success of the Mailing, but first, modifiers are calculated. The Base Target for the roll is the Size of the List. For example, if the target List's Size is 4 Million, the Base Target is four. This is modified by the Mailing Modifier, which is found on the Mailing card. It is further modified by any Specialties the given List has. If the List that was targeted has a Specialty that matches the type of Scam that is doing the Mailing, the player adds two to the Target Number of the roll. For example, if an Adult Scam is targeting a List with the Adult Specialty, the Target Number is increased by two.

After all modifiers are calculated, the player rolls a single six-sided die. If the roll is less than or equal to the modified Target Number, the Mailing was successful and the Rating of the Scam that initiated the Mailing is increased by one. If the roll is less than or equal to the Target Number minus four, the Rating of the Scam is increased by two. For example, if the Target Number is six and the player rolls a 3, 4, 5, or 6, the Scam's Rating is increased by one. If the player rolls a 1 or 2, the Scam's Rating is increased by two.

For an example of the Mailing procedure, refer to the section titled "Example of Play," below.

Each time a Mailing is played for its Mailing Effect, a Gruntle is placed on the List that was the target. If a Proprietary List ever has a number of Gruntles on it greater than or equal to half its printed Size, that List loses all its Gruntles and moves to the Unwashed Masses Area. For example, if a List of Size 4 had two Gruntles on it, it would lose those Gruntles and move to the Unwashed Masses Area. A List of Size 5 with three Gruntles on it would also lose its Gruntles and move, but a List of Size 5 with two Gruntles on it would not move. This applies to merged Lists as well. For example, a Proprietary List with a printed Size of 3 merged with another List with a printed Size of 5 having four Gruntles counters on it would be moved to the Unwashed Masses Area (because 4 is equal to half of 5 + 3). All the Gruntles would be removed and the Lists would remain merged.

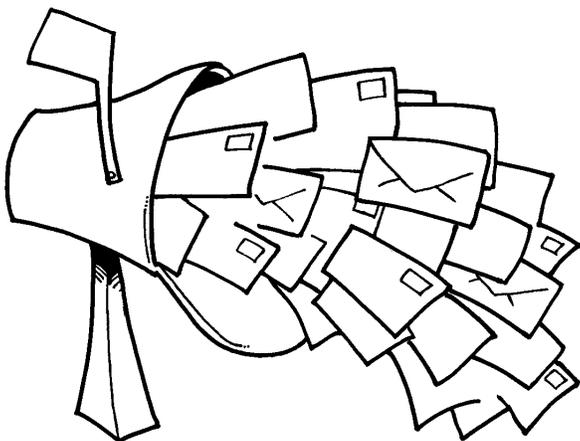
If an Unwashed Masses List ever has Gruntles equal to its printed Size, all of the Gruntles are removed and it is placed in the discard pile. So, for example, if an Unwashed Masses List with a printed Size of 4 had four Gruntles on it, it would be discarded. The same thing applies to merged Lists, so a Size 4 List merged with a Size 3 List having seven Gruntles on it would be discarded.

No player may play more than one Mailing Card for its Mailing Effect per turn unless some other card allows him or her to do so. (A player may play more than one Mailing Card per turn, but only one of them may be used for its Mailing Effect. The others may only be used for their Special Effects.)

Hardware. When playing a Hardware card, the player simply places the card from his or her hand face up in his or her Hardware area. The effects described on the card take effect immediately, and remain in effect until the card is removed from play for some reason.

Winning the Game

A player wins the game when, at the beginning of one of his or her turns, he or she has a collection of Scams whose Ratings sum to a total of twenty or more, or when he or she has a single Scam with a Rating of twelve or more.



Example of Play

Mr. Gates, Mr. Jobs, and Satan are playing a game of SPAMMERS. After all the cards are shuffled, Satan deals every one three List Cards. Each player examines his cards and selects one List to go to the Unwashed Masses Area. Each places his other two Lists face up in his Proprietary Lists Area. Once that's done, Satan deals another three List cards (because there are three players) face up to the Unwashed Masses Area. Next, each player is dealt six Action Cards, and play begins with Gates, who won the privilege in a round-robin rock-paper-scissors tournament.

Gates draws one Action card, plays Offshore Money Laundering Ltd. (which has an Initial Rating of zero) to his Scam Area, and announces that he will be playing Reboot! Reboot! for its Mailing Effect. He announces that Offshore Money Laundering will target one of the Unwashed Masses Lists which has a Size of five. Gates' Target Number is five (because Reboot! Reboot!'s Mailing Modifier is +0 and there are no other modifiers). He rolls a four, so he increases Offshore's Rating by one to one. (If he had rolled a one, the Rating would have increased by two because he would have beat the Target Number by four.) He then places a Gruntle on the List that was the target of the Mailing. That done, he discards Reboot! Reboot! and his turn is over.

Jobs is next. He plays Psychic Acquaintances Network to his Scam Area and draws two Action Cards. He places a Rating counter with a value of one on his new Scam, because it has an Initial Rating of one. His three Actions expended, his turn is over.

Satan plays Router Tap to his Hardware Area, plays Built By Prisoners, Inc. to his Scams Area (it has an Initial Rating of zero, so he places no Rating counter on it immediately), and plays Insider Trading for its Special Effect. Following the instruction on that card, he adds two to the Rating of Built By Prisoners. He places a "two" counter on it, discards Insider Trading, and his turn is over.

It's Gates' turn again, and play continues....

Some time later in the game a situation a little more complicated arises. Jobs finds himself using Last Generation Technology for its Mailing Effect (Mailing Modifier of +4) to make a Mailing from Offshore Money Laundering Ltd. to a List which consists of three merged Lists (printed values: two, three, and four) and has two Gruntles on it. His target number is eleven (the sum of the printed values [9] minus the number of Gruntles [2] plus the Mailing Modifier from Last Generation Technology [+4]). He rolls a six; that's enough for Offshore Money Laundering to gain two points of Rating (because his roll of six is less than the Target Number of eleven, minus four). Satan, however, immediately plays Marketing Wizard for its Special Effect, decreasing Jobs' Target Number from eleven to nine. (Marketing Wizard specifically states that it may be played right after a Mailing roll is made.) Since Jobs' roll of six is less than nine but more than nine minus four, his Scam only gains one point of Rating.

After many more turns of play, the game nears its end. Mr. Gates has three Scams, each with a Rating of six. Mr. Jobs has four Scams, with Ratings of eleven, three, one, and one. Satan has not been doing so well. (Being the Prince of Darkness only gets one so far, apparently). He has two Scams, with Ratings of six and five.

On Gates' turn, as one of his Actions, he makes a successful two-point mailing, increasing one of his Scams to a Rating of eight. His total is now twenty, and he will win the game at the beginning of his next turn, provided his Scams still total twenty at

Credits

Game Design: Jeff Tidball

Illustrations: David Gatzmer

Computer Coloring: John Nephew

Graphic Design and Project Management: Jeff Tidball

Playtesters: Jim Beecher, David Chart, Jerry Corrick, Joe Donaghue, Peter Hentges, Pete Jansen, Lydia Leong, Kim Martineau, Link Martineau, John Nephew, Nathan Nolan, Jacob Schafer, John Schwartzbauer, Brian Strassman, Karina Swanberg, and William "Violence" Vos

Special Thanks

Jim Beecher, Joe Donaghue, and John Nephew, the SPAMMERS humor squad

Andy Tidball, for having a 286 motherboard handy

Bob Brynildson, Jerry Corrick and Link Martineau, for reasons obvious to them

No Thanks

All the real life spammers and spam houses who relentlessly fill all of our mailboxes with trash, smut, and crap. Drop dead.

Public Service Announcements

SPAMMERS is a work of satire. Have a sense of humor and no one will get hurt.

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**ATLAS
GAMES**

PO Box 131233

Roseville, MN 55113

Customer Service Hotline: (612) 638-0098

E-Mail: AtlasGames@aol.com

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that time. Jobs' turn is next. He has two Insider Trading cards. He plays both of them (taking two Actions) for their Special Effects. The first reduces Gates' Scam from eight to six. The second increases his own eleven-point Scam to thirteen. Now Jobs will win at the beginning of his next turn (since he has a Scam rated at twelve or better, and Gates no longer meets the victory conditions). Jobs draws a card for his third Action. On Satan's turn, he finds that he has nothing in his hand that can stop Jobs, so he draws three cards, which do not help him. Gates' turn takes place as normal, since he no longer fulfills the victory conditions. He can't stop Jobs from winning either, so after Gates draws three cards in desperation, Jobs wins at the beginning of his turn.