

guilty, I am frustrated. If I had avoided the call ... none of this would have happened.

Discipline has been a huge aspect of working at home. After researching this topic I have come up with a few ideas that I hope will assist those that suffer the same dilemma.

Figure out what time of the day you are most productive. For me it is first thing in the morning. I get up at 6:00am and work till 11:30am. I get more done in that time then in the middle of the afternoon when I am falling asleep at my computer.

Set a schedule for the day. Write down all the projects you are working on, appointments that you may need to go to, and things that need to get done around the house. You must also schedule lunch and breaks. While compiling this list to write down things you will procrastinate about the most and put them before lunch or break. This as reward time!!

Prioritize this list. Add items to your schedule that are most important, when you are most productive. You can itemize your projects by using A, B or C, with A being the most important.

It's a regular work day. If you begin at 6:00am, you should only work till 2:00 or 3:00pm. Stick to this rule. One thing I found is that I am all across the board, working a couple hours here and there. I feel jumbled and frustrated with this schedule. Although we do have a lot of freedom working from home this routine can get tiresome.

Get up and get going. One thing I have really noticed about working from home is that it is very convenient to stay in your pajamas all day. Try getting up and getting dressed. Even if it is just a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, it will make you feel so much more energized than wanting to go back to bed.

Have all your material ready. If working on a certain clients file, move that file to the front of the filing cabinet. If you are doing a lot of mailing that day, make sure that you have a surface you can easily do this on. By working on client projects for a specific period of time and putting them back in the file cabinet, you will save time and energy. Keeping your office organized will allow you to be much more productive throughout the day. Keep your desk clean.

Keep distractions to a minimum. When making a schedule, include time to check and respond to email. Turn off the warning in your email that tells you every time you are receiving an email. Keep personal calls to a minimum. If you do not have a second line, you need to screen your calls and return personal calls at the end of your day. You will feel more relaxed chatting about your day when it is really over. Make sure family and friends know that your office or office space is a place of business. Keep the household items around you to a minimum. This will only distract you and cause you to feel guilty for not doing more around the house.

Create a motivational atmosphere. Add plants and

family photos. Have quiet music in the background. Hang motivational quotes in your surrounding. Whatever your environment would be in a regular office is what you need to create at home as well, minus the politics.

Be flexible. Remember the reason that you first chose to work from home. Even though you still need to make things easier for yourself by sticking to your plan, allow yourself some flexibility. If something comes up that needs your attention, adjust your schedule and make up the time later. This is the joy of working from home.

Finally, REWARD YOURSELF!! Give yourself a pat on the back for getting the job done. Nothing will be more motivating then knowing that you can enjoy a glass of wine, or an hour at the beach or some quality time with your family – uninterrupted and free of guilt.

Working at home as a Virtual Assistant was a decision we made to have the freedom to have our own business. The best we can hope for is to choose the time for doing what we love to do most.

Now if I could just listen to my own advice....❖

Tammy Lorette – Virtually-Yours.ca – Professional Solutions for your administrative needs. Virtually-Yours (<http://www.virtually-yours.ca>) offers administrative assistance 'Virtually'. She is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA), as well as a Certified Real Estate Support Specialist (IVAA). VY services range from Word Processing to PowerPoint presentations, and creation of advertisements, newsletters and marketing material. Visit her website today for more information.

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JOIN CVAC

BECOME A MEMBER



CVAC is by Canadian VAs, for Canadian VAs. Members of CVAC are in a variety of stages of running their Virtual Assistance businesses in Canada. Some have just started, while others have been at it for some time. By being in these different stages, we can share the do's and don'ts of running your business. Veteran VAs have "been there and done that" so they can enlighten others as to what works and what doesn't. New VAs have a fresh perspective and bring new ideas to the group.

Whether you are already established in the VA industry, just opened your virtual business, or are in the research process of setting up your own VA practice and are seeking guidance, CVAC is for you!

Read more about the benefits of joining CVAC at <http://www.cvac.ca/member.php> ❖

MANAGING EMAIL

By Tammy Lorette & Elayne Whitfield-Parr

Managing email from listservs can be a pain - especially if you are a member of more than one group. If you find the emails to be too much you have several alternatives to help keep a handle on the emails. The first would be to set up your account at Yahoo Groups to only accept Daily Digests. This will allow you to receive only 1 email with up to 25 posts right in it. Or, you could set up a rule in your email program to move all emails from the group to a specified folder so you can then look through them when you have time.

**Make sure you have Cvaconnection@yahoogroups.com set up in your address book.*

**Create a folder in you Inbox for your CVAC messages, by right clicking on your Inbox label and selecting to add a New Folder. Name it accordingly.*

Option # 1

- Select Tools from the main menu, followed by Rules and Alerts
- From the Rules and Alerts screen select New Rule
- The Rules Wizard page appears, click Start from a blank rule
- In Step 1, leave Check messages when they arrive highlighted and click Next
- On the following screen in Step 1, put a check mark in the box marked – from people or distribution list. - In Step 2, click the underlined people or distribution list and locate the address in your address book for Cvaconnection@yahoogroups.com. Double click to add this to the From box. Click OK and Next.
- In Step 1, put a check mark in the move to the specified folder box. - In Step 2, click the underlined specified
- Locate the folder created for the CVAC messages, click to highlight and click OK. Click Next
- If you have any exceptions, you can select them here otherwise ignore and click Next
- In Step 1 Specify a name for this rule (eg. CVAC Messages) - In Step 2 Select Turn on this rule

You can now select Finish. You are now back at the Rules and Alerts window. Select Run Rules Now and put a check mark in the CVAC rule box then select Run Now.

Click Close, then Apply and OK.

Option # 2

- Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com>, to view the Yahoo! Groups home page
- If you belong to more than one group, you will see a list on the left side of the screen
- Select the CVACConnection group from the list, which will direct you to the Yahoo! Group CVAC home page
- Select Edit My Membership, located on the right side, you may be prompted for your Yahoo username and password
- In the Message Delivery section on this page select Daily Digest
- Scroll down and select Save Changes

As a Full Member of CVAC, you are asked to stay on the email discussion and use one of the above suggestions to keep a handle on the emails you receive. If all our members took themselves off the email discussion list, there wouldn't be any discussion and then CVAC would be just another website.

Tammy Lorette – Virtually-Yours.ca – Professional Solutions for your administrative needs. Virtually-Yours (<http://www.virtually-yours.ca>).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEWMARKET LUNCH – 1ST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

THE BUTTERY

NORTH EAST CORNER OF DAVIS DR. AND YONGE ST.

17565 YONGE ST., NEWMARKET, ON 905-836-0300

12:00 NOON

MEMBERS: LISA MARTYNUIK, DIANNE MOON, MARION TRIPP, SUSAN JESSOP, DEANNA SMYTHE, TERRI DONAVAN, ELAYNE WHITFIELD

BRAMPTON LUNCH – 2ND FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

CASEYS, TRINITY COMMON CENTRE (HWY 410 & BOVAIRD DR)

BRAMPTON 905-799-8464

12:00 NOON

MEMBERS: LISA IVALDI, ELAYNE WHITFIELD, JANICE BYER, HILARY FEINDEL, ZIZI VOLFOORD-HULL, AMY EWART

GTA VA BREAKFAST – 3RD SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

PERKINS FAMILY RESTAURANT (HOLIDAY INN)

600 DIXON ROAD (DIXON & MARTIN GROVE) 416-240-9741

10:00AM

BARRIE LUNCH - 4TH THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH.

KELSY'S RESTAURANT ON BAYFIELD, BARRIE

12:00 NOON ❖

Spam: Not my idea of a lunch meat anymore – Part 1

by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA
Docu-Type Administrative & Web Services

Nope... spam is now used to describe unsolicited emails and it is becoming an epidemic. If you're lucky, you only receive 10 or so a day. However, if you have been using the Internet for any length of time and have an email address, you tend to get a heck of a lot more spam, especially if you run a business online and have your site listed in many locations. In fact, studies show that spam represents more than half of the world's email traffic.

And the virus' that come in every day.... don't get me started! I have been asking myself the same question for years, "why can't those intelligent people who have the ability to write virus', use their talents for good rather than evil"?

Unwanted emails are an unfortunate result of the advancement of technology. Along with the great gadgets that we have in our lives today, we also have these pain in our Inboxes. No matter how long you have been online, if you have an email address you are eventually going to get spam. You see, spam comes from everywhere and discriminates against no one.

THEY GETCHA COMIN', THEY GETCHA GOIN', THEY JUST PLAIN GETCHA.

The following are some of the unscrupulous ways these spammers go about getting your email address and how you end up with piles of junk mail.

Harvesters are always hoping for an easy crop:

Email harvesters are the most popular ways that your email address gets into the hands of spammers. These automated software programs scour the Internet and pull email addresses from websites and other online sources. So, if you have your email address published anywhere on the Internet (ie. websites, forums, etc.), it has probably been picked up by numerous harvesters already.

Harvesters look at the coding of websites for portions that contain the @ symbol and 'mailto:'. They then gather up the information and send it back to the person who simply had to start the whole automated process by starting on one page and letting the software take it from there.

Take a stab at it:

This is (from what's been reported) one of the next most popular tactics spammers use to get their spam messages out there. They take a stab at just about

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FEATURED CVAC

MEMBER

KIMBERLEY KENNEY



VAKK Business Services has been in operation since April 2003. Kimberley founded the company after a year of researching the Virtual Assistant field and fell in love with the "concept"!

She had taken a Business Administration course from her local college before opening up her practice and has "real world" knowledge to pass on to her clients, street smarts if you will!

Being an Entrepreneur fits Kimberley to a tee as she wears many hats in running her business. She specializes in Marketing Assistance, Desktop Publishing and Web Design, but offers a bevy of general office duties to her clients.

Kimberley brought her Daughter into the business just recently, Belinda has accounting knowledge, but is off taking a course to upgrade her skills, so VAKK will be able to offer Bookkeeping services to their clients.

VAKK Business Services has been building their client base steadily for the past year, and feels that "networking" is a top priority for any new VA trying to break into this new burgeoning field. Joining like minded groups and building relationships is what it's all about!

Kimberley says...it's all about learning something new everyday and being "indispensable" to clients.

Virtual **A**ssistant **K**imberley **K**enney
[VAKK Business Services](#)

VOLUNTEER FEATURE



Tana Woodward of Tana Woodward & Associates – Virtual Office Services
www.virtualofficeservices.ca

Tana has owned Tana Woodward & Associates – Virtual Office Services since 2002. She loves the variety and the new challenges that present themselves every day. Keeping up with technology that is constantly changing and using that knowledge to assist her clients with their administrative needs is challenging and rewarding.

Tana is a "generalist" and handles a variety of projects for many different clients. In addition, she loves being a "personal assistant", and looking after her clients' day to day business. She plans to expand her business to include writing and editing such projects as business and grant proposals and utilizing her creative writing skills to assist her clients.

Tana lives in Prince George, BC with her husband and teenage son and daughter. Her family traveled across Canada this summer for five weeks and had a wonderful time. She's now back in her office and looking forward to a busy fall.

any number of combinations of commonly used prefixes for email (ie. info@, webmaster@, sales@, bill@, etc.) or combination of numbers and letters. They throw that together with every domain name they come across and send out the millions of emails that all of us would rather not get. Even if you don't have a website, these spammers will find you. Unfortunately, if you have an email address from one of the free services, you may end up with more than less commonly known domains. However, most of them now have spam filters installed, which we will delve into later.

Mailing lists with a little something extra:

How many times have you filled in an online form? Do you remember that little check box that was already filled in that said "would you like to receive special offers from our partner sites"? Did you uncheck it or did you figure this was a reputable company so they must only send out offers from other reputable companies so you left the checkmark there? Well, unfortunately not all of those companies will be as trustworthy as you would hope and they sell off their contact lists or they inundate you with their own advertising or worthless emails.

You have two choices in such a case. Look for a privacy policy or statement that says they will not sell or give out your name to anyone or, simply uncheck that box (or check that box, whatever the case may be).

"Please confirm your email address":

Be very cautious of accepting or responding to any email asking you to confirm anything. Some spammers have been known to pretend that you sent

a request to subscribe to something and that you need to confirm that request. Or, they put on an email "if you did not request this, please click on this link to unsubscribe". Never respond to anything like this! They are simply trying to confirm that your email address is valid and then they will start inundating you with their "great offer" or "medically recommended" product.

And the good, ole hackers:

Of course hackers are in on this goldmine. Spammers sometimes call upon the 'services' of hackers to infiltrate the databases of large corporations. They aren't asked to go in for information such as credit card numbers; they are strictly there to gather up email addresses that can then be used by the spammer. If you have a lot of contacts in a database on your site, don't make it common knowledge. Those that make it known that they have lots of contacts are just asking for trouble.

In the next installment in our series on Spam, we will look at some of the ways you can help to reduce the amount of unsolicited emails in your inbox. If you would like to read the whole series, please visit <http://www.docutype.net/press.htm>.

Janice Byer, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Services (<http://www.docutype.net>) provides professional, creative and affordable virtual office assistance, small business website design, and website hosting. She is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA), Master Virtual Assistant (MVA) and co-founder of the Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection (www.CVAC.ca). She is also the author of [Surfin' The Net - Docu-Type's Virtual Collection of Links](#), which is filled with the secrets of her success. Visit her website for more information.

New Full CVAC Members:

Arlene Larkin - [Virtual Ink Office Services](#)

Sylvia McGrath - [S McGrath's Virtual Office](#)

Mary Benoit - [Access Administrative Solutions](#)

Heather Reece - [Your Temporary Office Services Solution](#)

Lisa Bosch - [The Distant Assistant](#)

Vivian Chiasson - [The Admin Bin](#)

Sylvia Stypa - [Support 4 U](#)

Angela Nardella - [VA4U](#)

Kimberely Kenney - [VAKK Business Services](#)

Courtney Verbrugge - [Connected Business Services](#)

Carrie Burgess - [Craigeith Clerical Services](#)

Cynthia Lise Neil - [Dragonly Executive Resource](#)

Lisa Farley - [Off Your Desk](#)

Shirley Caissie - [Virtual Admin Assistance](#)

Irene York-Pauze - [Cybergal Business Solution Center](#)

Trisha Roberts - [The Virtual Advantage](#)

If your business is shining right now and you've made the news, email us at info@cvac.ca with the particulars and you will be featured in an upcoming issue. ❖

VA QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME

Q: How do you change a signature for email messages?

A: In a Word document or an e-mail message, click Options on the Tools menu, and then click the General Tab - Click E-mail Options, and then click the E-mail Signature Tab - Type the title of your e-mail signature or choose from the list box, click the signature you want to change - Under Create your e-mail signature, make the changes you want. Click Replace.
Note: To change a signature for an individual message, make your changes directly to the signature in the message.

Q: One of my US clients is planning to forward their phone line to me and is looking for a better rate than what I currently have. I'm currently with Telus and I was thinking they could forward their line to my smart ring number. I don't want to change my service provider. Any suggestions?

A: I have a Packet8 VoIP phone for a client in Chicago. It has a Chicago phone number so any calls I make to his clients are actually local calls. It also has free unlimited long distance calling within the US and Canada. The price is \$19.95/month - flat rate.
<http://www.packet8phonecompany.com/>

Q: Does anyone know of a free backup utility that will allow me to schedule an automatic backup of ONLY certain folders and files?

A: It might be a good idea to disable your security and anti-virus programs while you do all of the below. Put in your Windows XP Home CD. Close the installation pop up that comes up go to Start... My Computer

Right click on the CD drive letter (ie. E)

Choose Explore

Double click VALUEADD

Double click MSFT

Double click NTBACKUP

Double click NTBACKUP.MSI and the installation will start

Q: I've had an enormous number of pop-ups when I'm on the Internet. I have both AdAware and Spybot. I run them, clean off everything they find and an hour later I have pop-ups again?

A: Try POW! It's a great, free pop-up killer that works! You control the pop-ups that it kills. The first week or two you will be killing a whole lot of them, but then it's wonderful.
<http://www.analogx.com/contents/download/network/pow.htm>. ❖

For more on Questions and Answers, Please visit the archives at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CVACConnection>



Have a suggestion for our newsletter?

Nature gave us one tongue and two ears so we could hear twice as much as we speak ... Epictetus
Email us at info@cvac.ca ❖

CVAC EVENT NOTICE

Please let us know of any get together's or CVAC member events that are taking place in your area. We will list you on our event calendar, broadcast the details of your event to the members and we'd love to post a picture of the event too!

CVAC will contribute financially to local networking or trade show events. [Contact us](#) for more information. ❖

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