

# How to Whitelist Email Addresses

## Why use the spam quarantine's white list?

It's impossible to classify email with perfect precision. Consequently, safe mail is sometimes mistaken for undesirable mail.

However, if you add an address to your personal white list, you are telling the spam firewall that the sender is safe and you always want their messages. This eliminates the possibility of accidental blocking.

## Should I whitelist addresses or domains?

### When to whitelist an address:

Let's say a correspondent uses an email service like Gmail or HotMail that places advertisements and links at the bottom of messages. Sometimes that's enough to increase a spam score and the message is blocked or quarantined.

In this case, you would want to whitelist the sender's address such as kchenlee@gmail.com

*Should I whitelist the entire domain, e.g. gmail.com?*

No, this tells the spam firewall that **all** messages from gmail.com are OK. If there is a security breach and spam starts flowing from Gmail, the firewall would pass it through. Whitelist just an address, not the entire mail domain.

### When to whitelist a domain rather than an address:

A common spam firewall error is to block travel itineraries and receipts, so we'll use that as an example.

Let's say you use Expedia for travel arrangements. You want any and all mail sent from expedia.com to get to you so that you don't miss any critical travel documents. You should whitelist the entire expedia.com domain.

*What if spam starts coming from expedia.com? Shouldn't I whitelist a specific address like mailer@expedia.com?*

No, you cannot predict what address Expedia will use. Mail may be sent from confirmation@expedia.com and then itinerary@expedia.com and then getready@expedia.com. No matter what address they use, you need their messages. Rather than trying to guess what address they will use, just whitelist the entire domain, expedia.com.

## OK. How do I whitelist an address or domain?

1. Log into the spam firewall quarantine: <http://www.skidmore.edu/spam>
2. Once in the quarantine, click the **Preferences** tab.
3. Under the Preferences tab, click **Whitelist/Blacklist**.
4. Type a specific address or a domain that you want to always pass through the spam firewall and quarantine.

### Messages can be stopped despite whitelisting:

- If a message contains a virus, it will be stopped.
- If the sender is on an international black list, the message will be stopped.
- If an attachment is too large, the attachment will be stopped.
- If an attachment has a bad filename, e.g. too many periods in the name, it will be stopped.

### Example of whitelisting a domain:

### Allowed Email Addresses and Domains (Whitelist)

Email Address	
expedia.com ←	Add
aaa.com	
alamo.com	
continental.com	
enterprise.com	
john.smith@jamestown.net	
kchenlee@gmail.com	
travelocity.com	
united.com	

Email sent from addresses entered here will not be analyzed for spam, but will be scanned for viruses.

Example of whitelisting an email address:

### Allowed Email Addresses and Domains (Whitelist)

Email Address	Bulk Edit
kchenlee@gmail.com ←	Add
expedia.com	

5. Click the **Add** button. The address or domain is added to the white list.
6. Unless you have more to whitelist, log out of the spam quarantine.

Log Off  
kchenlee@skidmore.edu ←

English ▼

## Questions

*I review my quarantine. Why don't I wait for the message to be quarantined and then deliver or whitelist it?*

Not all mail makes it to your quarantine. Some mail is considered so obviously malevolent that it's blocked, i.e. it is not quarantined, you do not see it, and only the sender gets a notice of the delivery failure.

*So ... the sender can just resend it or let me know and then fax it.*

No human is at the other end of automated email from Expedia, Travelocity, and Southwest Airlines.

Minor correction: Actually, some systems do care. After a set number of rejections, they stop sending you email. In other words, if you don't get *Harvard Health News* on your white list, they will drop you from mailings because of too many rejection notices.

In addition, parents don't want to fax or snail mail their students. They want, and deserve, quick email exchanges. Their mail needs to get through with as little fuss as possible. If they're on the student's white list, there will be no problems.

*What is the difference between blocked and quarantined email?*

**Blocked:** The spam firewall thought the message was so clearly malevolent that it was stopped outright. In addition, when you blacklist an address, mail from that source is blocked.

**Quarantined:** The malevolence score is medium. The firewall quarantines the message in case you want it.

**Delivered:** The mail passed all tests and was passed on to your inbox.

Here is a snapshot of a nine hour period with the results of the firewall's tests.

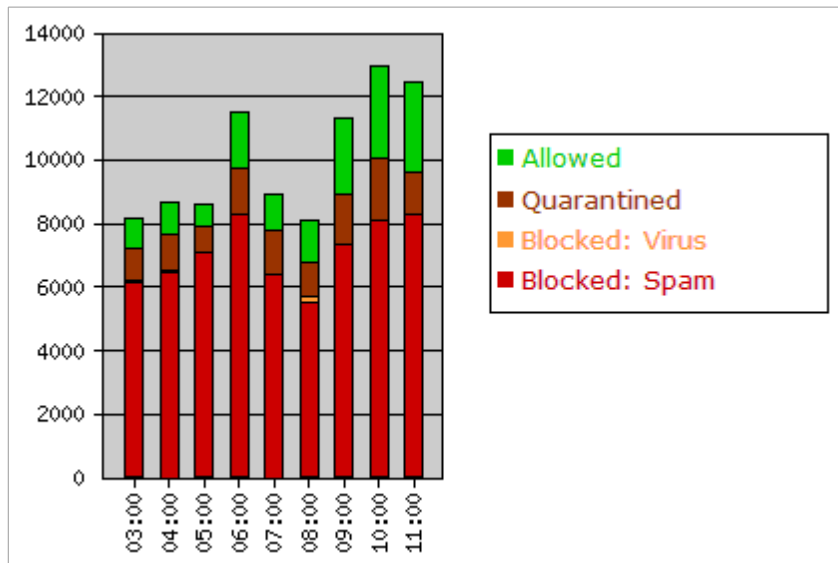
The large red area on the bottom failed the test badly and was completely blocked. At 03:00 that was 6,000 messages.

A small yellow section at 08:00 shows a virus attack that was blocked.

The brown section had a medium score. It was passed on to your quarantine where you make the final decision.

The small green section at the top passed the spam and virus tests with flying colors. It was passed to your inbox. Roughly 1,000 of the 8,000 messages at 03:00 met this condition.

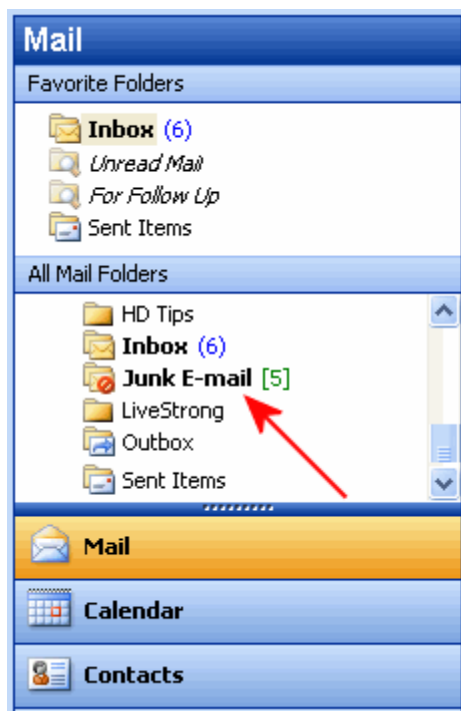
In other words, in that one hour on one day, Skidmore College received slightly more than 8,000 messages of which only 1,000 were good. Did some spam get through? Yes. Did some good mail get stopped? Yes. It's not a perfect process.



*I use the junk filter in Microsoft Outlook or Apple Mail. Does the white list affect that junk filter?*

No. The white list described in this document affects only the Barracuda Spam Firewall.

This is the junk folder in Outlook 2003. You can turn the junk filter on or off. If you have items in this folder, filtering is on.



Junk folders like this one in *Outlook* and its counterpart in *Apple Mail* are not affected by the Barracuda Spam Firewall white list.

Adding an address to your *Outlook* contacts has the same effect as whitelisting the address.

*A correspondent sends me photos or other large attachments. What is the effect of the white list?*

None. The email system administrators have set a maximum message size (header, body, plus attachments) of 5 megabytes. If a message exceeds that size, it will be rejected. The white list has nothing to do with this limitation.

*I have had messages rejected because of the name of an attachment. Does the white list override this?*

No. One of the mail system's virus filters looks for poorly named attachments. For example, viruses sometimes use multiple periods in a filename, e.g. Thesis.Chenlee.2007.doc, a word document. In certain Windows computers the filename extension is hidden so this technique allows a virus executable to look like a document and thereby trick the recipient into double-clicking it. An example would be Thesis.doc.exe which looks like Thesis.doc if the real file extension is hidden. The exe means it's executable and might contaminate your computer. The server's antivirus program stops those. It has nothing to do with spam.

*I think messages were blocked yesterday or earlier. If I whitelist an address now, will they be released?*

No. The white list is not retroactive. It affects the rating of new messages only.

The ideal situation is to create a white list before there is trouble. If you expect to buy tickets through Expedia, go whitelist [expedia.com](http://expedia.com) before making the reservation. If you're a student and you think your parents will email you, add their address(es) now, not after there's a problem.