



NEIGHBOURHOOD ALERT DEV BOARD UPDATE: 53

Date: 25th March 2020



Note: You are receiving this email circular because you are listed as a key contact involved with your organisation's Neighbourhood Alert system, including senior administrators and members of the Practitioners' Group. If you feel you should not be on this list, please reply to feedback@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk and I will remove you.

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This is a notification to keep you in the loop regarding the impact caused by the amount of emails currently circulating the country and a message campaign from Action Fraud.

Current email traffic surge

You will be aware that the public are now receiving a barrage of information from a wide variety of sources (not just Alert) by email and social media. Neighbourhood Alert alone has delivered 519 separate Alerts in the last 30 days relating to Corona Virus, which is just over 3 million emails just on that subject!

We are sending around 20% more emails than usual, around 9 million this month, but have also noticed that due to global traffic, most email providers have much longer queues than usual. BT Internet particularly is pushing a high number of emails back to us to queue, no doubt due to a huge increase in email traffic globally and nationally.

When we queue emails our systems automatically retry to deliver again a few minutes later but have been known to be kicked back repeatedly for several hours. This can accumulate in a large message taking up to 24 hours to fully deploy. Just to be very clear, we can launch millions of emails within seconds. The issue is the capacity of the email providers being able to receive and deliver them at this time, when they are incredibly busy.

One issue that you may not be aware of is caused when chunks of the same text from lots of sources is repeated verbatim on emails. Some email providers identify repeated paragraphs as potential spam, which adds to the delays in delivering those messages. Our email reputation is the highest possible rating and we are known to all the biggest email providers but we experience delays if you cut and paste text that every other sender is using currently.

Action: I would just ask that, during the current period, please give careful consideration to the need for large (5k+) email messages, especially if they are repeating health and safety information that is being sent by other official sources.

I would suggest that the messages **encouraging the public to be more vigilant against fraud, particularly about sharing their financial and personal information**, are perfectly legitimate to be sent on Alert, especially where they refer to NHS and .GOV for other guidance and advice. However, on the subject of reducing emails and duplication where possible, please take note of the following:

Action Fraud Campaign.

As many of you will know, we have been delivering Action Fraud messages on behalf of the City of London Police for several years and they have always been very well received by the public. However, since October 2019 nothing has been sent on Alert due to internal changes at the NFIB.

This lack of coordinated national messages has led to sporadic messages being sent out by various administrators and I do appreciate that some communication from the NCA, National Economic Crime Centre and City of London Police has encouraged specific messages to be sent.

The main reason for this message is to let you know that Action Fraud, via the Fraud and Economic Crime unit are going to **send a campaign of preventative messages over the next seven days**. These will reach over 640,000 users that have opted-in to Action Fraud messages, across all areas of the UK.

What is in the campaign?

Police contacts may have received the “City of London Police, National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, Coronavirus fraud briefing – updated 24 March 2020” which outlines the seven main areas for distribution. In short, the campaign covers the following headings:

Campaign Summary

- 1) More people may fall victim to #onlineshopping fraud as they self-isolate due to #COVID19.
- 2) People may be worrying about their finances during the #COVID19 outbreak.
- 3) As more people work from home due to #COVID19, fraudsters may try to get you to change a direct debit, standing order or bank transfer mandate,
- 4) As more people work from home due to #COVID19, fraudsters may capitalise on slow networks and IT problems,
- 5) Fraudsters could try to take advantage of the financial uncertainty surrounding #COVID19 by offering people sham investment opportunities.
- 6) Action Fraud have received reports of #COVID19 related scams.
- 7) A number of #COVID19 related phishing emails have been reported to Action Fraud.



The campaign has been arranged by the following contact (who is now on this Dev Board distribution list):

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Fraud and Economic Crime

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Action: If you or your colleagues are about to send Alert messages regarding these subjects or, perhaps from the same collateral, please reduce the duplication and email traffic by allowing the Action Fraud messages to cover these issues over the next seven working days.

I hope all that makes sense. Please be assured that my team are working hard to keep everything working smoothly and are here to support you all in your vital roles.

Best regards

Mike Douglas

Product Director: Neighbourhood Alert

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