

WEB WATCH THE LID ON SPAM IS STILL LOOSE

IT HAS BEEN a year since Congress passed, with much ado, the CAN-SPAM Act, which set restrictions on unsolicited e-mail. But the law, which took effect on Jan. 1, 2004, has done little to stop junk messages. In fact, a new report by e-mail security outfit **MX Logic** says 97% of unsolicited commercial e-mail still flouts the law.

Forgive industry experts if they say: "I told you so." The law does not address the underlying technology that aids spammers. "They invade PCs or bounce the messages from host to host, making it almost

impossible to get to the source," says Andrew Lochart of e-mail security provider **Postini**.

To be sure, a handful of unlucky spammers are being prosecuted. On Jan. 13, the Texas attorney general filed the state's first CAN-SPAM lawsuit against **University of Texas** student Ryan Pitylak, the head of the world's fourth-largest spam ring, according to watchdog

agency **Spamhaus**. Pitylak didn't return calls.

Still, "people should not have a false sense of comfort from any statute that purports to crack down on this," says a spokesman for California

75%

The portion of all e-mail traffic in 2004 that was spam.

Data: Nucleus Research

Attorney General Bill Lockyer. Indeed, judging by the traffic, most spammers are staying one step ahead of the law. —Erin Chambers