The Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group (MAAWG.org)
Code of Conduct for Messaging System Operators

The Code of Conduct is a voluntary set of principles directed at MAAWG member and nonmember Messaging System Operators that seeks to discourage bulk messaging abuse of any [1] peer-to-peer messaging platforms. Specifically the Code of Conduct:

- Provides a set of principles for the responsible operation of a messaging service.
- Provides a framework for expected Messaging Operator actions in response to abuse (both for abuser and abused) and direction for inter-operator communications.

Principles of the Code of Conduct [2]:

1. Messaging operators should provide end users with a policy document (e.g., Acceptable Use Policy), which defines permissible/prohibited uses of the messaging services.

2. Messaging operators shall make reasonable efforts to hold customers accountable to the network's Acceptable Use Policy. Patterns of abuse that emanate from an operator's network should be a concern to that operator and its customer(s) to resolve in a timely manner.

3. Downstream receivers have the right to protect their servers, networks, users and other applicable resources from abuse by other operator's systems. In exercising this right, they may take action that prevents abusive messaging systems from accessing their resources. Decisions to implement protective measures to prevent access or provide reduced access to a particular messaging operator's resources should be based on evaluating the need to protect those resources with the desire to deliver quality messaging service to an operator's users.

4. Messaging operators should make reasonable efforts to communicate with other operators regarding abuse issues via manual or automated methods to address implementation of "protective measures."

Note 1: The Code addresses messaging from a particular sender to a defined group of recipients and is not explicitly meant to apply to those Internet institutions for the publishing of messages to a generalized audience that is self-selected, such as Usenet or Listservs.

Note 2: The Code's principles may further be supported by MAAWG Best Practices documents, if and when developed and approved. The Best Practices documents are intended to highlight technical implementations and operational recommendations for the principles of the Code.

Note 3: The Code is not meant to supplant, supercede, or otherwise replace any accepted standard of the IETF. It should be interpreted and applied in conformity with relevant rules of international law, laws of individual Nations, States, or Sovereignties in which messaging operators function, and Internet standards.