workers in Hawaii's construction industry has been declining for 20 years. In recent years that percentage has dropped to less than 30 percent of the local construction work force. As chairman of Associated Builders and Contractors, Hawaii, I ask this question: Why is it we are being asked to eliminate 70 percent of our local work force from this work by mandating PLAs and opening the door to importing out-of-state workers who will send their tax dollars out of Hawaii?

As citizens, contractors and residents of Hawaii, we must be diligent in opposing union-only PLAs. In addition, we must support our local economy, our local governments and our local workers by fighting to keep the playing field level in government contracting. Let us join together in preserving fair and open competition in the marketplace.

Robert Hugh Joslin lives in Wailuku, Maui, and is chairman of the board of the Associated Builders and Contractors, Hawaii.

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TECH VIEW

There are ways to control some of that horrible spam

By Kiman Wong

If only spam were as laughable as the famous "Monty Python" skit by the same name. If you're online at all, you're bound to get junk e-mail touting everything from investments in Nigeria to pitches for Viagra, from term life insurance to pornography.

Enough already!

While there are no precise numbers, it's been estimated that 40 percent to 50 percent of all the e-mail is spam. I believe the percentage is higher still. One morning, for example, I downloaded 84 e-mails, and every single one of them was spam.

Mass e-mailers target everyone with a computer, which means this rubbish ends up in all of our mailboxes, including those of our kids. Getting all this junk is bad enough; the cost of dealing with it is astronomical. This blight is costing our country billions of dollars a year in lost productivity as well as resources such as hardware and software.

Even though it's not likely we'll ever be rid of it, there are things you can do to control it, both legislatively and on a personal level. The only sure way to stop spam is to never respond to it. If companies don't get any response, they might get the message that they are wasting their time and money.

Further, major Internet service providers such as Road Runner, AOL and Earthlink have systems working to block spam before it gets to you. Their systems use a list of "known" spammers' e-mail addresses. Spammers change their e-mail addresses frequently, however, so this method has been only partially successful.

To improve spam-blocking, there are software tools that can at least reduce the number of unwanted e-mail. For example, Matador from MailFrontier (**www.mailfrontier.com**) and SpamNet from Cloudmark (**www.cloudmark.com**) have gotten excellent reviews. I've had reports that Matador blocks about 90 percent of junk mail. It costs $29.95 for the program. Cloudmark's SpamNet is free to download but costs $3.99 a month to use.

In addition to software filtering, there are preventive steps you can take to reduce spam. A commonsense approach is to never, ever purchase anything advertised via spam. Often, spammers have an option to remove yourself from their lists, but I wouldn't suggest you take them up on it. This can be a ruse because once you respond, they know that your e-mail is legitimate and they will only send you more spam.

Also, registering for "free" games or programs will likely get you on a spam list. This "free" software is given out by companies hoping to market other services to you. Agree to the terms in the deal, and it's also likely your e-mail address will be sold to still another company, which in turn will send you more spam. It's a vicious game, as you can see.

Be careful about divulging your e-mail address. Do so only with institutions or companies you feel you can trust. If you must reveal your e-

mail address, us a temporary one from Hotmail, Yahoo or another free service.

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Kiman Wong, general manager of Internet services at Oceanic Time Warner Cable, is an engineer by training and a full-time computer geek by profession. Questions or comments should be addressed to kiman.wong@oceanic.com.

Local companies are available to help in the anti-spam wars

The founders of LavaNet, a widely known local ISP, have founded a separate company called Tiki Technologies (**www.tikitechnologies.com**) that specializes in protecting against spam and viruses. It's a subscription-based service rather than a software package and is available in platforms ranging from five users (for $12.50 a month) to 500 users (for $625 a month).

Peter Kay, a popular commentator on technology and founder of Cybercom, has started an anti-spam company called Titan Key (**www.titankey.com**). This technology serves as a shield for Internet service providers. When it doesn't recognize a sender for a given e-mail address, it responds to the sender's e-mail server with a "no such user" error message. It's a service sold exclusively to ISPs and is not available for individual businesses. This system is being tested on the Road Runner Business Class e-mail services.

Hoala Greevy (**www.pauspam.net**), another widely known local entrepreneur, bases his anti-spam and virus-filtering software system (Pau Spam) on Linux, a free, sturdy open-source technology. Greevy said Pau Spam currently filters more than 250,000 messages a day and has subscribers in Asia, Australia, North America and Hawaii. It's available for individual users on a subscription basis for $1 a day. If you're interested, Hoala's company will provide a free introductory month's service.

The fourth local anti-spam artist is Earl Ford, a

Honolulu network engineer and founder of SystemMetrics. He's come up with a nifty anti-spam software called Intercept, which is compatible with virtually all e-mail servers and clients. Ford says his technology has been thoroughly tested and is used by a number of companies on the mainland as well as locally. Clients range from corporations to small businesses. Price is as low as $5 a month for individuals, and it is available as a subscription service. For more information about Intercept, visit **www.systemmetrics.com** .

SHOPPING SAVVY

Bunnies, bears and biscotti sweet fodder for Easter baskets

By Jan Paschal

NEW YORK >> For spring gift baskets, think bunnies and bears in sherbet colors, and biscotti with a taste of Hawaii.

These bunnies and bears from Sootheze do more than just look good. They smell good, too. Their floppy bodies are filled with flax seed and herbs, such as lavender, rosemary and thyme.

When microwaved for 90 seconds, these critters get just warm enough to soothe aches, ease cramps or ward off air-conditioning chills.

"They're so cute and extremely soft," said Lisa Hammond, owner of