The Economist explains

What is the point of spam e-mail?

And how do spammers profit from it?

To mark the publication of “Go Figure (https://www.amazon.co.uk/Go-Figure-Things-Economist-Explains/dp/178125625X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1481647976&sr=1-1&keywords=go+figure)”, a collection of The Economist’s explainers and daily charts, the editors of this blog solicited ideas on Facebook and Twitter. This week we publish five explainers suggested by our readers, who will each receive a copy of the book.

According to internet folklore, the very first spam e-mail was sent in 1978, to...