

Mobile Spam Volume Doubles to Forty-Three Percent

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According to Wireless Services Corporation, 43 percent of all mobile phone text messages in the United States are now spam, compared to just 18 percent a year ago. In 2004 this amounted to over 1.2 billion messages blocked by the company. Wireless Services Corporation, which runs the data networks transporting text messages for several carriers in North America, manages between 15 and 20 percent of all such traffic in the U.S.

"Everyone hates spam, whether it lands in your e-mail mailbox or mobile phone," said Rich Begert, president and CEO, Wireless Services Corporation. "But with mobile spam, consumers have to pay for the delivery of annoying, unwanted messages to their personal phone. Even worse, some of the spammers will try to trick you into making an expensive call or will attempt to change the device settings on your own phone."

The increased amount of mobile spam is attributed to the growing sophistication of spammers, who are venturing beyond the world of e-mail. While they initially sent messages to mobile phones via the Internet, they are now savvy enough about wireless networks to foil anti-spam technologies developed with e-mail in mind.

Efforts to combat mobile spam face several challenges. "Legislative attempts to limit spam are doomed because spammers are smart enough to launch their campaigns from overseas, where U.S. laws do not apply," said Begert. "Plus, most e-mail oriented anti-spam companies do not

understand wireless networks well enough to design the right solution."

According to a recent study published by the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland, carriers who don't figure out how to fight mobile spam risk losing their customers. That's because most consumers worldwide blame their carrier for the spam and are likely to switch companies as a result.

"Now is the time for carriers to create customer loyalty by protecting subscribers from this growing menace," advised Begert. "In addition to being irked by charges for incoming, unsolicited text messages, consumers will protest any perceived invasion of their privacy, and will assume their carrier allowed their information to get to spammers. Unless they get in front of the issue, carriers could see increased churn, unwanted legislation and certainly, a rise in customer service calls."

Wireless Services Corporation has built the only solution focused on the unique attributes of mobile spam. The company's wireless anti-spam software addresses multiple layers of the mobile network, seeks patterns specific to mobile devices and ensures rapid delivery of messages. Many e-mail-based spam solutions miss wireless-targeted spam and cause latency in delivery, which may be acceptable for e-mail, but not when a carrier is delivering mission critical, time-sensitive messages.

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