

US senators seek to squash spam

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A teenager uses a phone to send a text message. Two US senators declared war on spam on Thursday. Senator Olympia Snowe, a Republican from Maine, and Senator Bill Nelson, a Democrat from Florida, introduced legislation aimed at curbing unsolicited text messages on mobile devices.

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The m-SPAM Act of 2009 is intended to crack down on what the senators described as a "growing nuisance for millions of wireless customers."

"Mobile [spam](#) invades both a consumer's cell phone and monthly bill," Snowe said in a statement.

"There is also increasing concern that mobile spam will become more than just an annoyance," she said, citing the danger of "viruses and malicious spyware."

"This significant and looming threat must be addressed in order to protect consumers and vital wireless services," Snowe said.

"Spam e-mail is bad enough," said Nelson. "Now, we are seeing a proliferation of unwanted text messages -- and consumers are getting stuck paying."

The legislation would tighten existing laws and prohibit commercial text messages being sent to wireless numbers listed on the Do-Not-Call registry, a list of subscribers who have indicated they do not want to receive unsolicited calls from vendors.

According to figures cited by the senators, US wireless users received more than 1.1 million spam text messages in 2007, up 38 percent from 2006.

Some wireless subscribers have to pay to send and receive text messages with some plans charging as much as 20 cents per message.

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