

Facebook, Washington state target online spam

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Facebook is partnering with Washington state to combat a type of spam called "clickjacking" that is plaguing the social networking site, company and state officials announced Thursday.

Two separate lawsuits were filed in [federal courts](#) in California and Washington state against Delaware-based Adscend Media LLC, which officials say is behind the spamming.

"The way we think about it, security is an arms race," Facebook's general counsel, Ted Ulyot, said alongside Washington state Attorney General Rob McKenna at the social media company's Seattle offices. "It's important to stay ahead of spammers and [scammers](#)."

In "clickjacking," links on [Facebook](#) promising shocking or salacious videos have code embedded in them that spreads the link to the user's page. That makes it seem like the user "liked" the link, with the aim of attracting more clicks from the user's friends. The links eventually lead users to a survey or information from an advertiser.

Adscend Media is spreading spam through misleading and deceptive tactics and has encouraged others to do the same, McKenna's office said.

An email inquiry sent to Adscend was not immediately returned, and an attorney for the company had not yet been listed in federal court records.

[Social networking sites](#) are popular targets for spammers because people

are more likely to trust and share content that comes from people they know. This makes spam, scams and viruses easy to spread.

Still, Facebook says less than 4 percent of content shared on the site is spam. By comparison, about 74 percent of email is spam, according to security company [Symantec Corp.](#), though the bulk of it gets filtered out before reaching someone's inbox.

Facebook has more than 800 million users.

Named in Washington state's lawsuit are Adscend co-owners Jeremy Bash, of West Virginia, and Fehzan Ali, of Texas. The lawsuit says Adscend violated several state laws, as well as the federal CAN-SPAM act, which makes it unlawful to procure or initiate transmission of misleading commercial communication.

McKenna said Adscend has annual revenue of \$20 million.

Washington state is the only state partnering with Facebook. The company said it partnered with Washington state because of a history in the state of technology consumer protection.

The attorney general said Washington state has been a leader in technology consumer protection since his predecessor, now Gov. Chris Gregoire, began filing suits against malware and spyware users.

"As spammers adjust their tactics, we adjust ours," McKenna said.

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