



Published on *Enterprise Innovation* (<http://www.enterpriseinnovation.net>)

China exits 'dirty dozen' spammer countries: Sophos

By Enterprise Innovation Editors | Apr 30, 2010

The United States remains at the top of the heap when it comes to countries with the most **spam** ⁽⁷⁾ relayed to the Web, while China exits the 'dirty dozen' list and lands at the 15th place.

However, most dramatically, **China** ⁽⁸⁾ - often blamed for cybercrime by other countries - has completely disappeared from the so-called "dirty dozen", coming in at 15th place with responsibility for relaying just 1.9% of the world's spam.

The top twelve spam relaying countries for January to March 2010 are as follows:

1. United States 13.1%
 2. India 7.3%
 3. Brazil 6.8%
 4. S Korea 4.8%
 5. Vietnam 3.4%
 6. Germany 3.2%

 7. United Kingdom 3.1%
 8. Russia 3.1%
 9. Italy 3.1%
 10. France 3.0%
 11. Romania 2.5%
 12. Poland 2.4%
- Others 47.3%

Others 47.3%

Notable countries outside the top twelve:

- 13. Spain 2.4%
- 19. Netherlands 1.47%
- 20. Thailand 1.44%
- 21. Indonesia 1.29%
- 22. Taiwan 1.26%
- 25. Canada 1.12%
- 29. Philippines 0.91%
- 31. Portugal 0.78%
- 32. Japan 0.77%
- 33. Australia 0.69%
- 36. Malaysia 0.65%
- 37. Saudi Arabia 0.65%
- 42. Singapore 0.55%
- 43. Pakistan 0.54%
- 45. Switzerland 0.45%
- 47. United Arab Emirates 0.38%
- 48. Sweden 0.38%
- 50. Austria 0.36%
- 51. Ireland 0.33%
- 57. South Africa 0.24%
- 59. Norway 0.23%
- 60. Denmark 0.22%
- 61. New Zealand 0.20%
- 62. Hong Kong 0.19%
- 64. Belgium 0.17%
- 102. Finland 0.04%
- 111. Luxembourg 0.03%

"All eyes aren't so much on which countries are on the list, but the one which isn't. China has earned itself a bad reputation in many country's eyes for being the launch pad of targeted attacks against foreign companies and government networks, but at least in the last 12 months they can demonstrate that the proportion of spam relayed by their computers has steadily reduced," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at Sophos. "A new dirty 'gang of four' - South Korea, Brazil, India and their ringleader USA - account for over 30% of all the spam relayed by hacked computers around the globe."

Spam accounts for a staggering 97 percent of all email received by business email servers, putting both a strain on resources and wasting a huge amount of time to lost productivity. Used largely as a method for selling counterfeit or illicit goods such as fake pharmaceuticals, luxury watches and false diplomas, virtually all spam comes from malware infected computers (called bots, or zombies) that are controlled by 'botherder' cybercriminals.

Computer users can unwittingly allow their PCs to become part of a botnet in a number of ways, including clicking on malicious links that are frequently contained within the spam messages that the botnets are used to distribute. The only way for users and administrators to reduce the risk of being compromised is to run anti-spam and anti-malware protection and ensure all software and hardware is up to date with security patches.

"Countries such as the USA would do well to remember that cleaning-up infected PCs in their own back yard will be an important step in fighting cybercrime. Furthermore, we all shouldn't forget that if no-one bought products sold via spam there would be a lot less incentive to send junk email," explained Cluley. "Computer users should not just protect their computers from threats like malware and spam, they should also pledge to never ever buy anything advertised via spam."

By continent, Asia continues to dominate in spam, with more than a third of the world's unsolicited junk email relayed by the region. Although the US remains the top offender by country, North America as a whole has reduced its spam throughput since last quarter, dropping from second to third place.