

# Symantec January State of Spam and Phishing Report

## Highlights:

- Spam made up 81.69% of all messages in December, compared with 84.31% in November.
- Global spam volume fell again in December, and made a steep drop on Christmas day.
  - The volume has bounced back after hitting bottom on December 27. The spam percentage fell to 71% that day.
- The overall phishing landscape decreased by 15% this month. The decrease was attributed to a decline in almost all sectors of phishing.
  - The holiday season was most likely the cause of the decrease in phishing.

## Did Spammers Take a Holiday Break?

- Symantec has been monitoring the steep decline in spam for several months. This trend continued in December with the global spam volume falling 19.98% month-over-month.
- From the most recent peak in August, the drop represents a staggering 65.03% decline in spam.
- According to MessageLabs, there was a huge reduction in output from the Rustock botnet, which was by far the most dominant spam botnet in 2010.
- Since December 25, the Rustock botnet has basically disappeared as the amount of spam from the botnet has fallen below 0.5% of spam worldwide.
  - In addition to the decline in the Rustock botnet activity, MessageLabs also pointed out that two other major botnets disappeared off the spam map.
  - The Lethic botnet has been quiet since December 28, and the Xarvester botnet went silent on December 31.
- Symantec observed increasing use of freeweb domains and URL shortners in spam messages.
- On January 10th, Symantec observed an uptick in spam volume as well as spam output from Rustock botnet.
  - Spam volume on January 10th was up 49% compared to the previous day.

## Spammers' New Year's Resolution

- In the New Year, spammers were crafty to use getting in shape as a lure, and send out seasonal gym offers.

- While New Year's Day has already passed at the time of this report's publication, the Chinese New Year is in February, and gift baskets featuring food in spam messages have been observed.

### **New Bait Found in Social Media Phishing**

- In the past couple of months, Symantec observed a series of phishing websites spoofing social networking brands. These scams utilized many new bait tactics in an attempt to trick end users into giving away their confidential information.
- In one particular example, the phishing website was titled "Webcam" and the phishing page contained an image of a webcam.
- The phishing Web site gave the impression that the social networking site was providing a webcam facility for end users to interact with one another; however, the legitimate Web site does not provide any such kind of facility.
- In this second example, though pornography was the bait, phishers used a different kind of approach in the hopes of tempting end users. The phishing website claimed that the social networking brand has come up with a new edition meant for adult users.
- In the third example, the bait used was fake offers of hacking software. The phishing website contained modified content to help it look like an alternate version of a social networking site intended for professional hackers.
  - There were three fake benefits of hacker tools mentioned in the phishing web page. One was an opportunity to learn new tricks in social networking with the help of toolkits.

### **Adult Scams Masquerade Indonesian Facebook**

- Facebook has become very popular in Indonesia. The country is ranked third in the most number of Facebook users.
  - With more end users in Indonesia, phishers seemed to have gained interest in creating phishing sites that target Indonesians.
- Recently, Symantec observed an adult scam spoofing Facebook that targeted Indonesian end-users.
  - The phishing Web site was hosted on a free web-hosting site.
- Symantec notified Facebook regarding this issue, and they blocked this URL from being shared on Facebook.

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#### **A propos de Norton from Symantec**

Les produits [Norton](#) de Symantec permettent de protéger les clients contre les activités cybercriminelles grâce à des solutions [antivirus](#), [antispysware](#) et [antiphishing](#). Ces solutions sont peu exigeantes en ressources système. Symantec propose également des services de [sauvegarde en ligne](#) ou [d'optimisation PC](#) et [sécurité en ligne pour toute la famille](#). Devenez fan de [Norton sur Facebook](#), suivez [@NortonFR](#) sur Twitter et devenez membre de la [communauté Norton](#).

#### **À propos de Symantec**

Symantec est l'un des principaux fournisseurs mondiaux de solutions de gestion de la sécurité, du stockage et des systèmes permettant aux particuliers et aux entreprises de protéger et de gérer leurs informations. Les logiciels et services de Symantec