

# The State of Spam

## A Monthly Report – March 2007

*Generated by Symantec Messaging and Web Security*

## Monthly Spam Landscape

Spam activity in February of 2007 was fairly consistent with trends observed in previous months, though some new wrinkles appeared. Highlights:

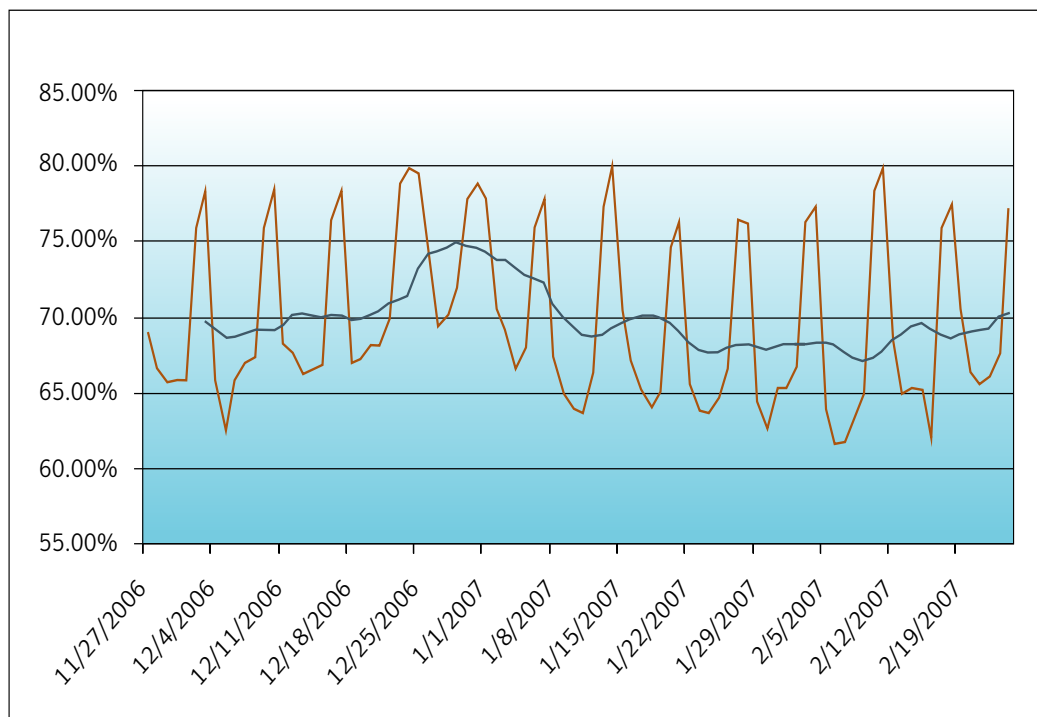
- Image spam percentages continue to be somewhat volatile and ended the month of February at a rate of 38%.
- Spam levels remained fairly consistent for the month of February at the SMTP layer and only increased slightly to 70%.
- Image spam literally has a new angle and is now combining slanted text along with other image spam obfuscation techniques.
- Adult spam continued its decline and has now reached an all time low of 3% of all spam.

## Percentages of E-mail Identified as Spam

### Defined:

Worldwide Internet Mail Gateway Spam Percentage represents the number of messages that were processed and classified as spam versus the total number of messages processed when scanned at the mail gateway. This metric represents SMTP layer filtering and does not include the volumes of e-mail detected at the network layer.

### Internet E-mail Spam Percentage



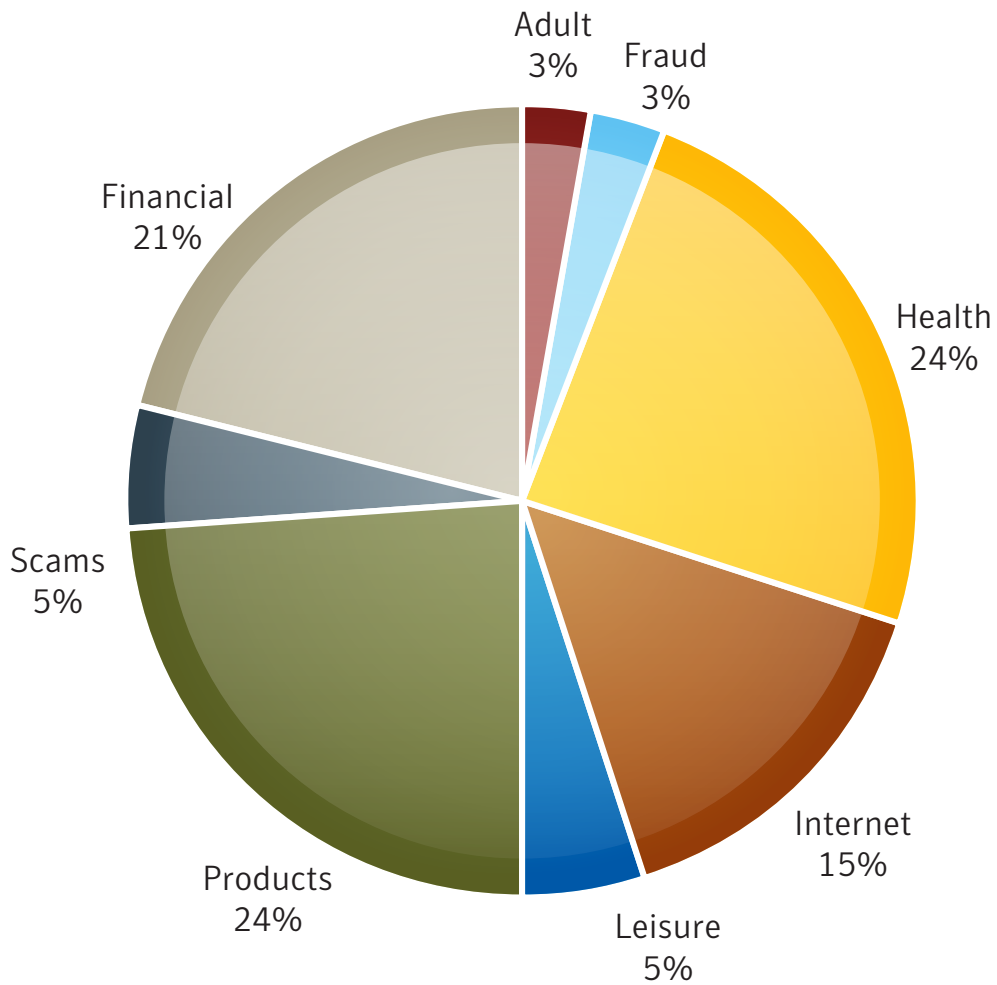
A trend line has been added to demonstrate a 7-day moving average.

## Global Spam Categories

**Defined:**

Spam category data is collected from classifications on messages passing through the Symantec Probe Network.

**Global Spam Categories (90 Days)**



## Category Definitions

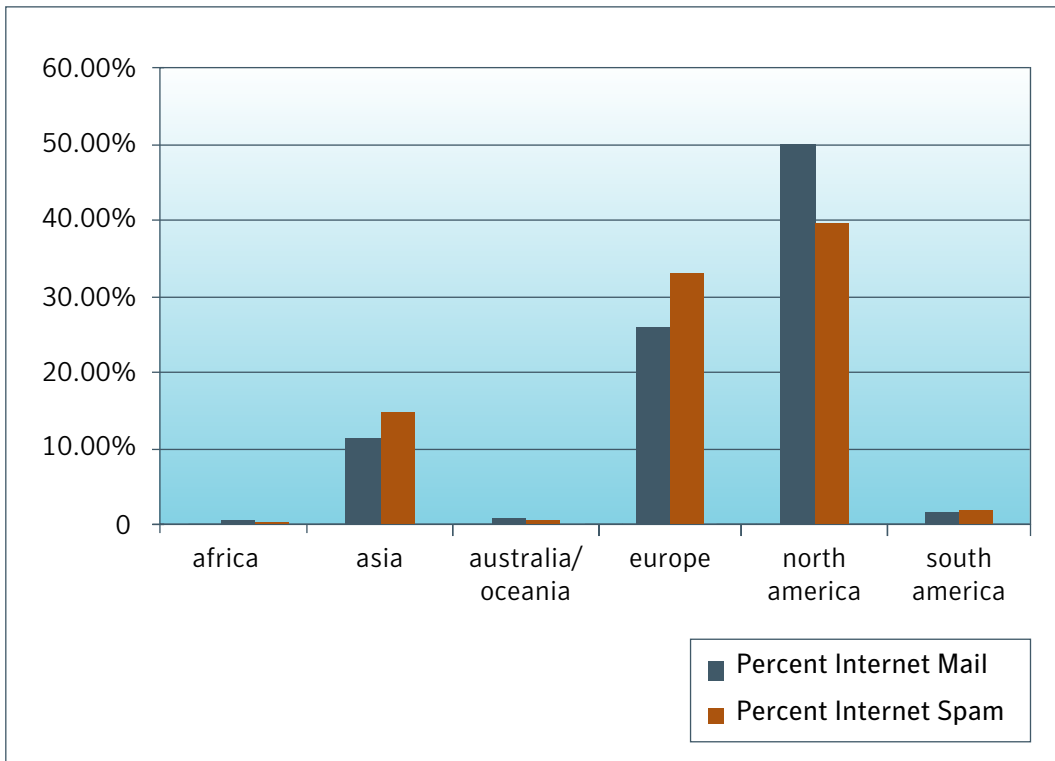
- **Products E-mail attacks** offering or advertising general goods and services. Examples: devices, investigation services, clothing, makeup
- **Adult E-mail attacks** containing or referring to products or services intended for persons above the age of 18, often offensive or inappropriate. Examples: porn, personal ads, relationship advice
- **Financial E-mail attacks** that contain references or offers related to money, the stock market or other financial “opportunities.” Examples: investments, credit reports, real estate, loans
- **Scams E-mail attacks** recognized as fraudulent, intentionally misleading, or known to result in fraudulent activity on the part of the sender. Examples: Nigerian investment, pyramid schemes, chain letters
- **Health E-mail attacks** offering or advertising health-related products and services. Examples: pharmaceuticals, medical treatments, herbal remedies
- **Fraud E-mail attacks** that appear to be from a well-known company, but are not. Also known as “brand spoofing” or “phishing,” these messages are often used to trick users into revealing personal information such as E-mail address, financial information and passwords. Examples: account notification, credit card verification, billing updates
- **Leisure E-mail attacks** offering or advertising prizes, awards, or discounted leisure activities. Examples: vacation offers, online casinos, games
- **Internet E-mail attacks** specifically offering or advertising Internet or computer-related goods and services. Examples: web hosting, web design, spamware
- **Political Messages** advertising a political candidate’s campaign, offers to donate money to a political party or political cause, offers for products related to a political figure/campaign, etc. Examples: political party, elections, donations
- **Spiritual E-mail attacks** with information pertaining to religious or spiritual evangelization and/or services. Examples: psychics, astrology, organized religion, outreach
- **Other** E-mails attacks not pertaining to any other category.

## Regions of Origin

**Defined:**

Region of origin represents the percentage of messages reported coming from each of the following regions: North America, South America, Europe, Australia/Oceania, Asia and Africa.

**Global Claimed Region of Origin (90 Days)**

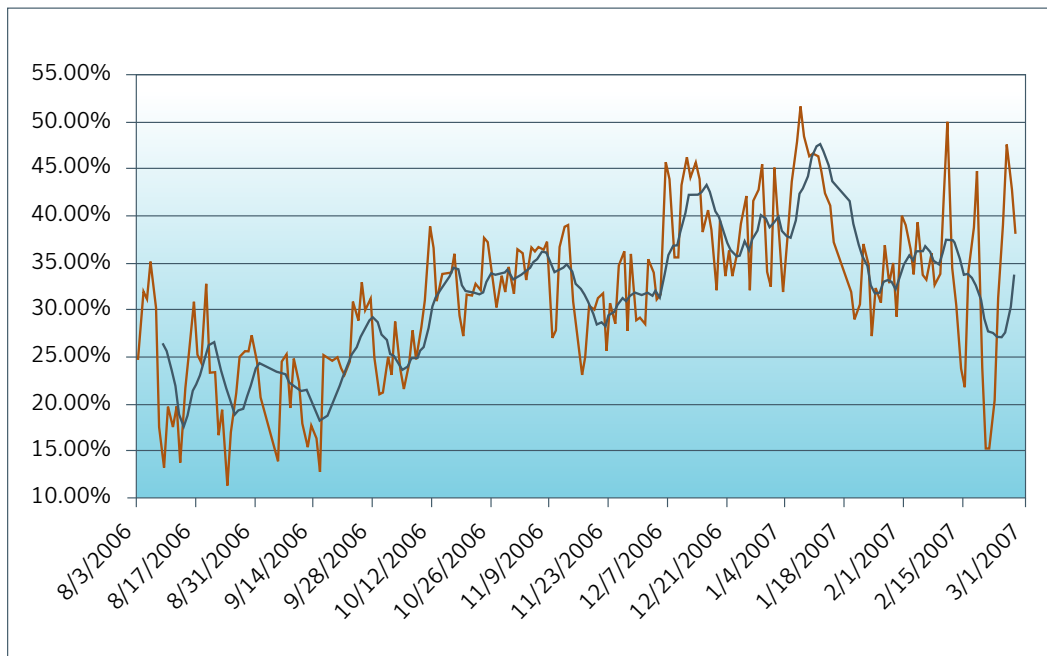


## Percentages of Image Spam

**Defined:**

The total number of image spam messages observed as a percentage of all spam observed.

### Internet E-mail - Percent Image Spam

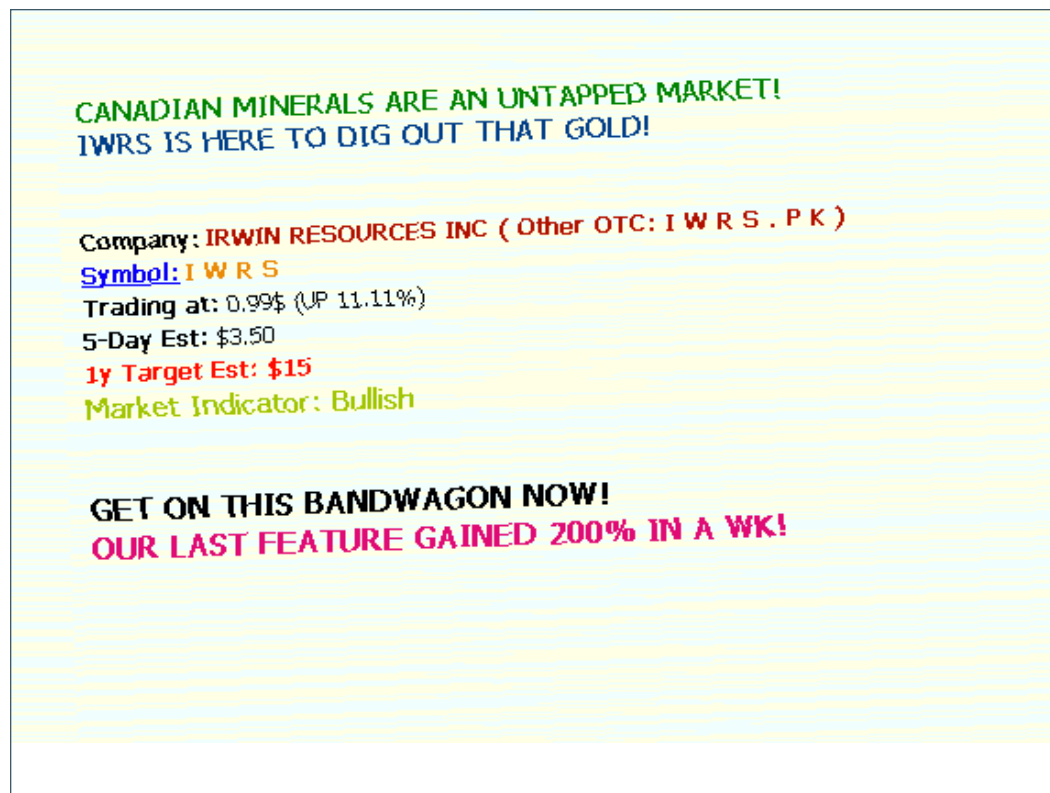


A trend line has been added to demonstrate a 7-day moving average.

## New Spam Techniques

### Slanted & Warped Text

This approach is not much different than previous techniques, however rather than making changes to individual characters within the text of the image, all of the text is slanted at either an upward or a downward angle. This technique may decrease the detection capabilities of some anti-spam technologies that are heavily reliant upon OCR (Optical Character Recognition) or edge detection.



## New Spam Techniques

### Casino & Image Spam Goes Global

Until recently almost all casino spam was in English. The month of February saw a recent surge of casino spam where single attacks were localized to several different languages including German, Italian and French. Likewise there has been a steady increase in image spam for multiple non-English languages. Although not new, these attacks demonstrate a growing localization of spam. In addition, these types of spam messages offer no new challenges to most anti-spam technologies.

### Sample Italian Casino Spam Message

I migliori giocatori giocano solo a Vegas, e i Migliori Bonus li troverete solo al Vegas VIP Casino!

200% sul primo deposito, 100% sul secondo e il terzo deposito, e come ciliegina sulla torta, 155% sul vostro quarto deposito!

Per un totale di ben 555€ di Bonus di Benvenuto!

Questo ed altro vi attendono al favoloso Vegas VIP Casino, dove si ritrovano i migliori!

<http://www.vegas555.net/lang-it/>

### Sample Russian Image Spam

**Обслуживание компьютеров**

- Ремонт, апгрейд и сборка компьютера.
- Установка и настройка программ.
- Подключение к Интернету.
- Лечение вирусов.
- Протяжка локальных сетей.
- Бесплатные консультации.
- Ремонт ноутбуков.
- Абонентское обслуживание.
- Приемлемые расценки на услуги

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Sample Chinese Image Spam

**“坐得正”纠姿器 (国家专利号: ZL200420037588.X)**

**作用:** 纠正学生不正确读写姿势, 保护视力、预防驼背。

**特点:** 拆装容易、携带方便、效果明显。

**使用方法:** 固定在学校或家庭任何一款写字台沿口, 并根据学生不同的坐高, 调整挡板至相应高度, 使挡板托住颈部, 防止学生前倾或下趴, 真正做到一拳一尺的标准坐姿。

**适用范围:** 学校、家庭

**使用前** **使用后**



户名: a680818 店名: 南京科 电话: 02562576555

纠姿器 看书器 握笔器



QQ: 700548

Sample Brazilian Portuguese Spam Image

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- \*Som integrado
- \*Rede 10/100 integrada
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- \*Fabricante Epcorn

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