



THREATForecast

AND REPORT

The **monthly Spam Soap Threat Forecast & Report** provides IT leaders and messaging security professionals with information on recent and potential email and Web threats. The forecast relies on current and historical data and trends, as well as expert analysis of real time spam and virus events monitored and assessed by the 24x7 Threat Operations Center.

September 2008 Threat Forecast

Spam Decelerates, But Still Grows

Spam levels increased 15 percent between July and August and are up 33 percent since June. Spam Soap expects spam levels to continue to grow as we head into the historically busy holiday season; however, the company does not expect growth rates to maintain the same breakneck pace that we've recently experienced.



McCain And Obama's CAN-SPAM Pass

We anticipate seeing an increase in "illegal" and "legal" political spam. What's the difference? Few realize that politicians are not beholden to the CAN-SPAM Act, which is limited to email whose primary purpose is promoting "a commercial product or service." Therefore, both parties can send as many unsolicited emails to as many people as they want – and as often as they like (Spam Soap is currently tracking both parties' email volumes). Of course, spammers will attempt to blend in by disguising their own illegal spam as non-commercial political email.



Beware Of Political FUD

With the overall increase of political spam, we also anticipate an increase in politically-themed blended threats such as emails containing links to malicious web sites. These may take the form of emails offering links to web sites containing controversial or provocative audio or video sound bites from the candidates. Instead, these links will potentially infect the user's computer with a piece of malware and/or enlist the PC into a botnet to help spread even more spam.

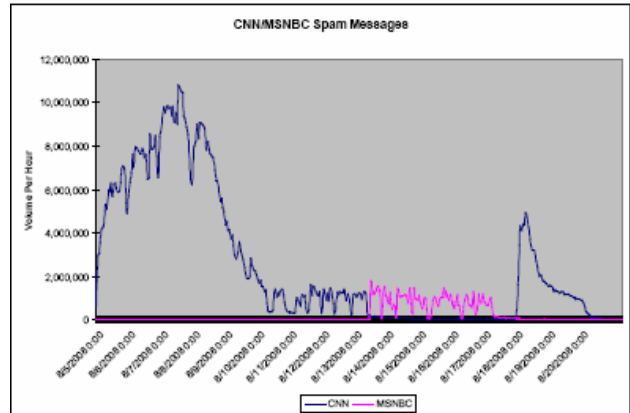
No Shame For Spammers

Be on the lookout for a new type of scam that Spam Soap has started to see during the last week of August. The email message appears to be a ransom note claiming that your baby has been abducted and that you need to pay a \$50,000 ransom. The email claims to attach a photo of the baby, which is actually a piece of malware.

August 2008 Threat Report

The large and consistent spam volume increases that Spam Soap has been forecasting for the past few months have finally arrived. Spam levels spiked nearly 15 percent between July and August. Since June, spam levels have increased by 33 percent.

The most notable spam outbreaks during August were the CNN and MSNBC spam outbreaks from earlier in the month.



While both outbreaks lasted only two weeks, the Spam Soap Threat Operation Center blocked 835 million fake CNN messages and 85 million fake MSNBC messages. Both outbreaks are no longer significant players, contributing fewer than 500,000 spam messages a day. Spam Soap actually forecasted the CNN outbreak in the June Threat Report & Forecast, stating that “a CNN news spam observed in late May could be a prelude to a broader attack. This particular spam didn’t contain anything malicious, which is often a tell-tale sign of a test run by spammers.” It looks like the test was indeed a precursor to a much larger effort.

CNN.com THE DAILY TOP 10

TOP 10 STORIES	TOP 10 VIDEOS
#1. 8-Foot Python Becomes Laundry	#1. Maine island loses trash can mail delivery service
2. Harried family forgets 3-year-old daughter at airport	2. Ancestor of T-Rex dinosaur unearthed in Poland
3. Olympic Sport: Blocking the Internet	3. FBI reveal sealed docs describing anthrax attack details
4. Kevin Costner appreciates politics and making movies	4. The three New Jersey brothers delight teens with fun, wholesome music
5. Bikers down to bare basics for eco demonstration	5. Afghan, NATO troops kill 17 militants in southern Afghanistan
6. Raiders kill 16 police at Chinese border post	6. Sex and the city forbidden
7. Tehran says it launched nuke missile	7. Dog Plays Mom for Tiger Cubs
8. Celebrity was seen naked on the beach	8. FBI reveal sealed docs describing anthrax attack details
9. Kidnap Dad in Custody, Girl Found Safe	9. Obama beats McCain
10. Mortgage rates rise to heavens	10. Doping scandal rush out before the opening

[More videos. More news.] More people saying*
***I JUST SAW IT ON CNN.com**

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To manage your settings click [here](#).
To unsubscribe from the Daily Top 10, click [here](#).

In addition to the dramatic volume increases, spam accounted for 91.49 percent of all email sent during the month of August.



Top 5 Categories of Spam

- 1. Health
- 2. Offers
- 3. Foreign Language
- 4. Education
- 5. Gambling

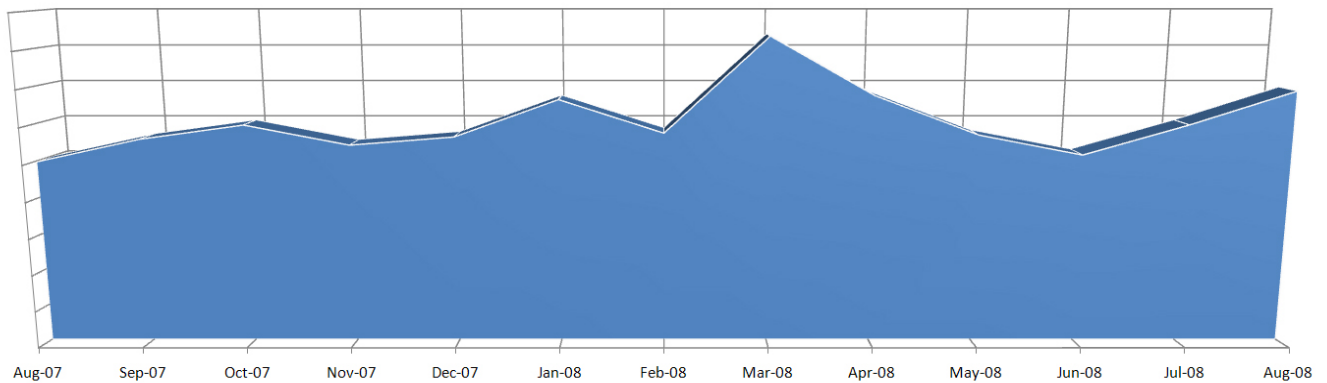
Top 5 Worms/Viruses

- 1. Troj/Invo-Zip (these are the fake FedEx notifications)
- 2. Mal/Spy-A
- 3. W32/Agent.ABQE
- 4. W32/Trojan.AUFA
- 5. Troj/Agent-HLV

Top 5 Spam Countries

- 1. United States
- 2. Brazil
- 3. United Kingdom
- 4. Russian Federation
- 5. Colombia

Historical Spam Volume



Most Prevalent Types of Spam

Fake CNN and MSNBC spam messages ruled the month

even though they were widely prevalent for only two weeks. In August, the Spam Soap Threat Operations Center saw over 835 million fake CNN and over 85 million fake MSNBC news updates.



In addition, Spam Soap saw an increase in email borne malware attacks during the month of August. The most prevalent of which was an email purporting to be a notification of non-delivery from FedEx. The email alleges that you sent a package through FedEx, but because the recipient's address was not correct when it was shipped, it had not been delivered. It then asks the user to print out a copy of the attached invoice (a .zip file which contains malware) and to collect a copy of the package at the FedEx Office (address of office not given, which should be one clear indicator that something is fishy about the email). Sample subject lines that we have seen in the Spam Soap Threat Operations Center include:



You Have A Package!!!

Tracking N <fake tracking number>

Peak volumes were approximately 21 million messages over a 24 hour period which crested on August 22nd before declining significantly over that weekend.

Is Britney Spears More Powerful Than CNN and MSNBC?

Spam volumes have not fallen back

to where they were prior to the large CNN and MSNBC outbreaks. Daily email volumes are still averaging 20-30 percent higher than July.

What's filling the gap? Brittany Spears is. Or rather, tabloid-style spam messages featuring subject lines such as "Britney Spears found Kevin with prostitute", "Britney Spears Gets New Tattoo After Mental Hospital Release", and "Britney Spears to Study Theoretical Quantum Mechanics at MIT." Also filling that gap were a significant number of emails alleging to be FedEx nondelivery notifications.

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