

Mobile Spam Study FAQ

Insights into Mobile Spam – World's First Collaborative Empirical Study

Contact?

www.mobilespam.org

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Main Study Contributors?

University of St.Gallen, bmd wireless (an Intrado company) and

Further contributing: ITU (International Telecommunication Union),
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Authors?

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What is Mobile Spam?

Mobile spam is to a mobile handset what email spam is to an e-mailbox. It is defined as unsolicited messages, which:

- try to sell something to the user or
- ask the user to call a phone number, which may be a premium-rate service or
- destroy or change handset settings or
- are simply messages of a commercial, non-commercial nature that are considered threatening or intruding upon a user's privacy.

Mobile spam occurs as text messages or Short Message Service (SMS), Multi-Media Messaging Service (MMS) or Video Messages. SMS holds the biggest portion in mobile marketing, but this fact may change with the evolvement of new, interactive technologies.

Study Approach?

The study applies a comparative research approach. On the one side, it analysis the consumer perceptions of mobile spam in Central Europe, North America and South East Asia, on the other side, the perception of mobile spam at mobile communication providers documented on a worldwide basis.

Scope and Survey?

Regional scope:

Central Europe - Germany, Switzerland and Austria
South East Asia - Singapore and China
North America - Canada and the United States.

Survey Concept

Web-based questionnaire was conducted between Nov. and Dec. 2004 in English, Chinese and German. Survey hosted by the University of St.Gallen. Participants were approached via panels and email Databases from the Universities (consumers) and bmd wireless/intrado (experts).

Participation Rate?

Contacted: 6'211 Consumers (mobile phone owners, aged below 40).
2'149 Experts (employees of Mobile Network Operators or experts in the messaging area)

Net Participated: 1'659 completed Consumer surveys (rate: 27,7%)
154 completed Expert surveys (rate: 7,1%)

Press:

Recipients of Press Release, sent out by Torsten Brodt and Ketchum (bmd/intrado's PR agency):

Media in general (as multiplier of study results), Telecom Forums/ Newsletters, Research Companies and Investment Banks as well as Mobile Network Operators.

Price: 299 €

to be ordered by email from Torsten.Brodt@unisg.ch - available as pdf file

Study Highlights?

- Central Europe (CE) and South East Asia (SEA) are the most active messaging regions in the survey, and they are the most troubled with mobile spam - more than 80% of participants have received a spam message at least once in 2004. Of those who have received mobile spam, on average 90% receive spam marketing from their operator, and an average share of 45% states to receive spam from third parties as well.
- In Central Europe, 57% of all participants have received 1-10 misleading messages with a premium number during 2004 (SEA: 31,8% / NA: 28,2%). Around half of all participants in SEA and NA received 1-10 messages from 3rd parties (CE: 42%) whereas NA 16,5% consumers stated that they have received more than 10 third party messages in 2004. A Fifth of the respondents in all regions have received more than 10 messages from the MNO. The majority has received 1-10 messages from the MNO during 2004 (CE: 65,2% / SEA: 76,7% / NA: 64,1%).
- Clearly, the majority of respondents are annoyed when receiving mobile spam and state that it has a negative impact on the MNO's brand. Interestingly though, in the message-active SEA-region, the degrees of annoyance are considerably lower than in CE and North America (NA)
- Along the same line, SEA participants have the highest acceptance levels, with 80% who rate 1-5 operator-originated commercial messages acceptable per month and 57% for 1-5 messages from third parties. The acceptance levels for the regions CE and NA lay clearly below that. In general, MNOs prove to have a fairly accurate judgement of the acceptance levels for spam messages.
- Although complaints to the MNO is the most likely action against mobile spam, only a small percentage has actually contacted the operator.
- MNOs are currently well aware of the effects and criticality of mobile spam on consumers. However, most MNOs are presently in a trial-and-error phase, applying reactive measures and testing various technological alternatives for avoiding spam. The formulation and communication of effective strategies and processes against spam are still pending at most MNOs.

Concluding Remarks (just for special interest):

See study on page 34.