

LINX PUTS INDUSTRY WEIGHT BEHIND INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT ANTI-SPAM CAMPAIGN

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The London Internet Exchange (LINX) - the world's largest Internet exchange and the UK's largest membership organisation for ISPs - has revealed it has been assisting government agencies around the world in the fight against spam.

LINX has become an industry member of the London Action Plan (LAP) network which co-ordinates action by government agencies and private sector organisations in 21 countries in a bid to achieve efficient and effective enforcement of anti-spam laws.

LAP this week announced the results of its first-ever global spam-trapping exercise which was undertaken last month in association with ICPEN (the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network).

Agencies analysed and categorised a sample of 138,904 spam emails from trap accounts and existing agency accounts as well as spam blocked by filters. The results produced a snapshot of categories of spam emails at the time of the exercise. The most reported categories were spam promoting software and computer equipment, adult pharmaceutical products, adult content, financial services and body enhancing products.

At this stage agencies have flagged a total of 3,241 emails for further investigation with regard to possible breaches of the law in various countries.

LINX is providing the LAP campaign with technical advice and assistance and will be hosting a secure website on which LAP member agencies can exchange information.

Malcolm Hutton, LINX regulation officer, said: "LINX and its ISP members actively combat spam by seeking to prevent this material getting onto networks – and have been doing so since the problem first materialised with the early commercialisation of the Internet.

"LINX members have strict provisions in their terms of service prohibiting their customers from sending spam and they act extremely promptly to restrain any customer abusing their networks for the origination of spam. Because they operate this simple, strict prohibition there is relatively little spam originating in the UK.

"Spam costs ISPs a considerable amount of money because they have to provide the capacity to carry all this e-mail traffic which the recipients simply do not want. There are also substantial costs for ISPs in handling enquiries about spam and spam prevention.

"We are therefore keen to assist overseas law enforcement agencies and other organisations to take effective action against the originators of spam.

"We hope the agencies involved in this exercise will use the results to develop strategies, in conjunction with overseas and domestic partners in the public and private sectors, to combat spammers and

reduce harm to consumers and legitimate e-commerce."

END

Notes to editors:

1. London Internet Exchange (LINX) is the world's largest volume Internet hub and the UK's largest membership organisation for Internet services providers (ISPs). A non-profit organisation founded in 1994, it operates high-capacity switching facilities at six London-based tele-hotels where its 170-plus members interconnect their networks to provide customers with rapid, cost-effective data transmission. LINX handles around 90 per cent of UK Internet traffic and its members include ISPs from the UK, continental Europe, the USA, Far East and Africa.

2. More than 70 law-enforcement agencies across 26 countries participated from 21 to 22 February in conducting a 'sweep' focusing on spam scams. This was the first ever co-ordinated sweep of the world-wide web for scammers using spam to target consumers.

3. The International Internet Sweep is a joint exercise which is conducted every year by agencies which are members of ICPEN. For the first time this year, the London Action Plan network (of which LINX is a member) joined the ICPEN sweep.

4. The first results of the first global Internet sweep on spam were announced this week at an ICPEN conference in Edinburgh.

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