



Press Release

NATIONWIDE SURVEY SHOWS THE PREVALENCE OF SPAM ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES, THREATENING GROWTH AND MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

*Eighty-Three Percent of Users Have Received Spam Messages in the Past Year;
Two-Thirds Would Consider Switching Social Networks Due to Spam*

SAN FRANCISCO—June 9, 2008—Cloudmark, Inc., [the global leader in carrier-grade messaging security](#), today announced the results of a nationwide poll conducted on its behalf by Harris Interactive®, which revealed that, in the past twelve months, more than four in five social networking site users¹ (83 percent) received unwanted (or spam) “friend” invitations, messages or postings on their social or professional network account. Similar to attacks found in e-mail, social networking spam generally targets users with unsolicited product messages or attempts to redirect them to a phishing site or one hosting malware. The problem is severe enough that two-thirds (66 percent) of users say they would be at least somewhat likely to switch to another social network if they were to receive a significant number of these unwanted messages.

Users are concerned with the rise of spam on their social networks and have experienced an increase over the past six months. The majority (80 percent) of social network users are at least somewhat concerned about spam, phishing and virus attacks on their social or professional network account. Many users (37 percent) have noticed an increase in the number of unwanted messages they have received in the last six months and nearly one in five (17 percent) say this increase has been significant. On average, users have reported receiving 64 unwanted, or spam, “friend” invitations, messages or postings in the last 12 months.

In the United States, social networks are very popular as nearly half of the online adult population (48 percent) has at least one social or professional networking Web site account. Social networks have grown enormously in the last two years alone. According to Forrester Research, Facebook has more than 60 million active users with membership doubling every six months and MySpace has more than 110 million monthly active users worldwide. To broaden their membership base, many social networks use a viral approach to recruit new members and provide multiple ways for members to interact with one another, including e-mail, mobile text messages, chats, blog/profile postings and message broadcasting. Unfortunately, the very qualities that make social networks successful – the wide variety of communication channels, the openness of the networks and the size of the audience – are also powerful lures for spammers and hackers.

“The results of this survey should be of concern to both social network operators and users,” said Jamie de Guerre, CTO of Cloudmark. “Social networking sites need to be concerned about the proliferation of spam and phishing attacks and the impact it could have on their ability to grow and retain members. Social networking providers must address the security issue head-on or risk declining usage and revenues. Meanwhile, consumers need to take the same precautions they have adopted in other forms of online communications, including never responding to unwanted messages and never posting personal information on their profiles that could lead to identity theft.”

¹ Throughout this release, the terms “social networking site users,” “social network users,” and “users” refer to online U.S. adults ages 18+ who have any social or professional networking website accounts (n= 972).

For a full copy of the survey results, please e-mail: pr@cloudmark.com.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is a global leader in custom market research. With a long and rich history in multimodal research that is powered by our science and technology, we assist clients in achieving business results. Harris Interactive serves clients globally through our North American, European and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

About Cloudmark

Cloudmark, Inc. is a global leader in carrier-grade messaging security, delivering the most accurate, high-performance and comprehensive real-time spam, virus and phishing protection for fixed, mobile and social networks. Cloudmark patented solutions combine Advanced Message Fingerprinting technology based on innovative, highly efficient algorithms and a Global Threat Network consisting of trusted reporters in every country across the globe to provide security intelligence and filtering at all points of the messaging infrastructure. Cloudmark solutions protect more than 600 million mailboxes for the world's largest service provider networks, including over 75 percent of major ISPs in the United States and Japan. Cloudmark's customers include EarthLink, Comcast, Cablevision, Charter Communications, Cox Communications, NTT OCN and Swisscom as well as leading hosting providers, Mailtrust, Synacor, NuVox and others. Cloudmark is a privately held company headquartered in San Francisco with offices in London, Tokyo, Beijing and Hong Kong. For more information, please visit <http://www.cloudmark.com>

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About the Survey:

This Social Network Scams study was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Cloudmark, Inc. between May 12 and May 14, 2008 among 2,033 adults ages 18+, of whom, 972 are social networking site users. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Marisa Borgasano or Payal Cudia.