

# MESSAGELABS INTELLIGENCE SPECIAL REPORT: SPAM RATES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

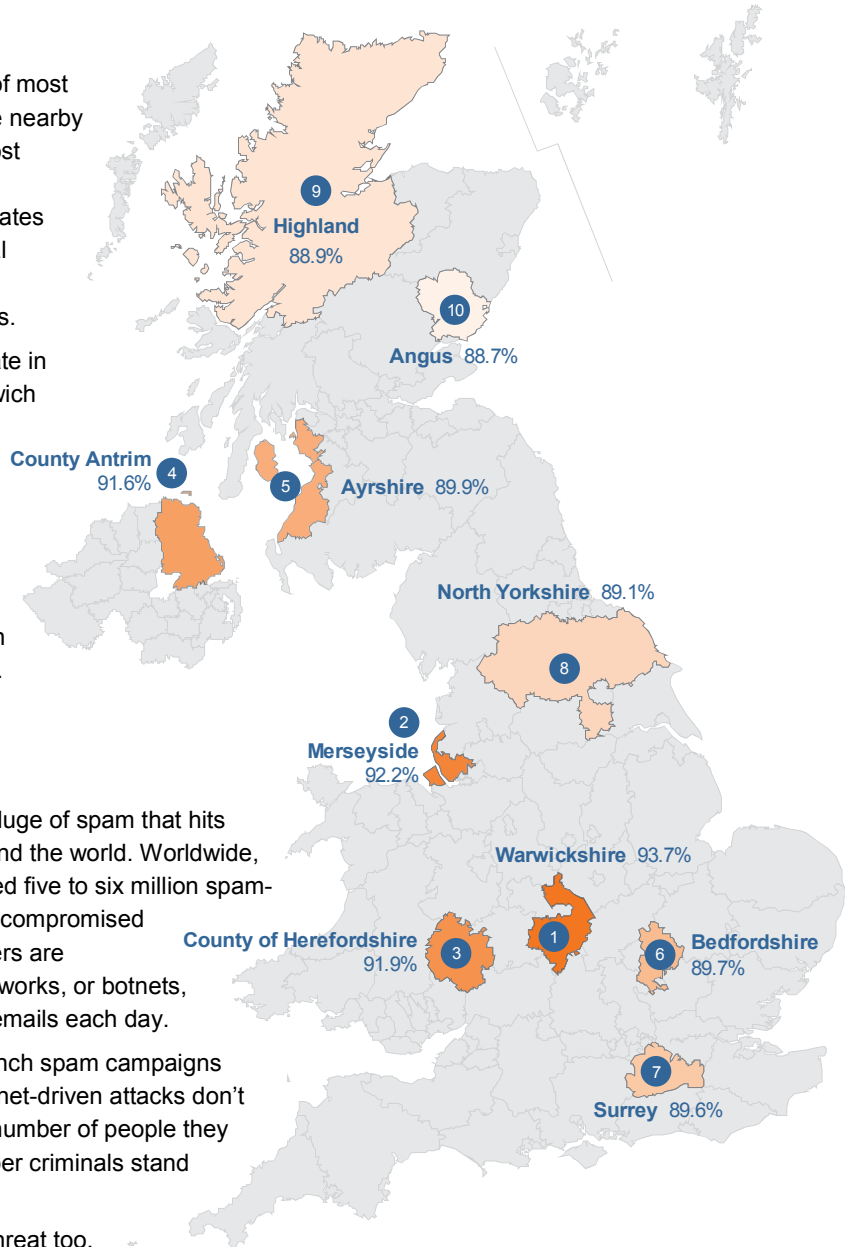
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MessageLabs



## LOCAL ANALYSIS

- Coventry has topped the 2010 list of most spammed UK towns and cities. The nearby county of Warwickshire was the most spammed county. In Coventry, the businesses with the highest spam rates were in the Wholesale, Professional Services (legal & accounting) and Transport & Utilities industry sectors.
- The county with the lowest spam rate in 2010 was Worcestershire, and Ipswich was the least spammed town.
- Overall, in the UK, the most spammed businesses were in the Telecoms, Accommodation & Catering and Education industry sectors, with the least spammed being in the Automotive, Recreation and Estate Agents industry sectors.



## GLOBAL ANALYSIS

- There is no safe haven from the deluge of spam that hits the inboxes of business users around the world. Worldwide, 90% of spam is sent by an estimated five to six million spam-sending computers that have been compromised by cyber criminals. These computers are organized into automated robot networks, or botnets, and send an estimated 120 billion emails each day.
- Botnets are sometimes used to launch spam campaigns targeting particular regions, but botnet-driven attacks don't often discriminate; the greater the number of people they can reach, the more money the cyber criminals stand to make.
- Targeted attacks are a worldwide threat too, though the level of danger an organization may face is largely determined by what data it has that may be worth stealing.
- More spam is destined for the Engineering, Automotive and Accommodation/Catering sectors, with 94.1%, 92.9% and 90.5% of email identified as spam, respectively. The least spammed sectors are Business Support Services (87.3%), General Services (87.4%) and Finance (87.6%).
- Areas with greater populations of small-to-medium sized businesses (SMBs) are likely to receive the greatest proportion of spam. Similarly, the least spammed areas are often home to some of the largest companies. For smaller businesses, spam drains valuable resources such as bandwidth, processing power and employee productivity.

## QUOTE

“This latest study shows that looks can be deceiving and that no town or city, whatever its size, is immune to cyber criminals, however the good news is that security solutions in the cloud can be flexible and scaled to match the needs of any organization,” said Paul Wood, MessageLabs Intelligence Senior Analyst, Symantec Hosted Services. “Interestingly, industries like Manufacturing, Automotive and Building & Construction which may employ many people, receive less spam. In these cases, the number of employees using IT is small in proportion compared to those in the Wholesale and Professional Services industry sectors which are targeted with higher levels of spam.”

## MESSAGELABS INTELLIGENCE TIPS FOR BUSINESS USERS TO STAMP OUT SPAM

- Protect your email address – your email address is like your phone number and exposing your email address online puts you at risk of being targeted by cyber criminals and spammers – think twice before you use it or use a disposable address that you don’t use much, keep your real address private and only use it with your trusted contacts.
- Never reply to unsolicited emails – even to complain. Acknowledging a spam email only validates your email address and can lead to more spam.
- Always avoid clicking on any hyperlinks contained in an unsolicited email, or opening any kind of file attached to such a message as these can be disguised and often serve only to confirm your existence to spammers or install malware onto your computer. Shortened hyperlinks from URL shortening services are popular online, but are also abused by spammers and may redirect your browser to a malicious website.
- Avoid downloading pictures in spam emails – these can be used to notify the spammer that the message has been opened. Many email applications allow you to turn off images except for those from trusted sources.
- Scams and advance-fee fraud emails should also be avoided – if it seems too good to be true, it probably is – the only way you can ever win a lottery is by taking part.
- Be careful how much information you share about yourself on social networking sites and be careful who you add to your trusted circle of friends. Always make good use of the privacy controls on the social networking site in order to limit what others can see on your profile. It may take some time, but it is worth the effort.
- Treat with extreme caution any unsolicited email arriving in your inbox that purports to be about a major current news story – it is likely to be spam.

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## ABOUT MESSAGELABS INTELLIGENCE

MessageLabs Intelligence is a respected source of data and analysis for messaging security issues, trends and statistics. MessageLabs Intelligence publishes a range of information on global security threats based on live data feeds from more than 14 data centers around the world scanning billions of messages and web pages each week. MessageLabs Team Skeptic™ comprises many world-renowned malware and spam experts, who have a global view of threats across multiple communication protocols drawn from the billions of web pages, email and IM messages they monitor each day on behalf of 30,000 clients in more than 100 countries. More information is available at [www.messagelabs.com/intelligence](http://www.messagelabs.com/intelligence).

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