

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

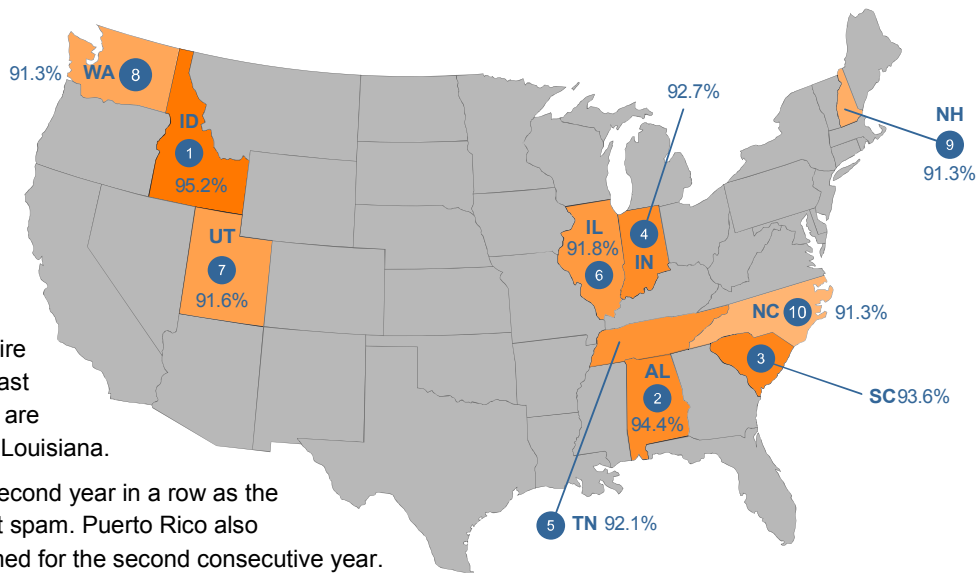
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MessageLabs



## LOCAL ANALYSIS

- The top spammed U.S. states are Idaho, Alabama, and South Carolina, with spam rates above 93 percent, well over the national average of 89.3 percent. These are followed by Indiana, Tennessee, Illinois, Utah, Washington, New Hampshire and North Carolina. The least spammed states/territories are Puerto Rico, Montana and Louisiana.



- Idaho tops the list for the second year in a row as the state/territory with the most spam. Puerto Rico also returns as the least spammed for the second consecutive year.
- In the U.S., the most spammed industries are Engineering, Automotive and Construction while the least spammed are Finance, Admin and Public Sector.

## 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

“Spam isn’t just a simple annoyance to businesses, but a real threat that can consume resources and put valuable information at risk regardless of location,” said Paul Wood, MessageLabs Intelligence Senior Analyst, Symantec Hosted Services. “From the World Cup to fake PDF Reader updates, even the most intricate scams are now widespread and the sheer size and power of today’s botnets are making possible what was once unthinkable.”

## 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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