

## Press Release

March 28, 2003

### Telia blocks computers that send spam

**As of noon today (Nov. 3), Telia will start to immediately block Internet traffic sent to and from computers that send junk e-mail or “spam”.**

**The background to this initiative is that the amount of spam being sent globally threatens the Internet’s operations and that computers in Sweden, without the knowledge of their users, are being taken advantage of by spam senders all over the world.**

**“Access to the Internet is a service that Telia offers to make life easier for people. The Internet is easy to use, but this constant flood of spam that we are now witnessing is creating costs and problems for our customers and we won’t accept it,” says Marie Ehrling, head of TeliaSonera Sweden.**

In a short time, the number of customer complaints related to spam and computer viruses has increased ten-fold from about 300 to 3,000 every 24 hours. One single computer that is infected with a virus can send more than 100,000 spam messages in a single day. Spam and viruses have become a global problem. According to calculations, spam now accounts for approximately half of all e-mail on a worldwide basis. Corporate customers are experiencing rapidly rising costs for lost productivity and bandwidth. The mailboxes of consumers are being filled daily with unserious offers, of which many are illegal.

As a consequence, the openness of the Internet is being threatened since a growing number of operators are preventing traffic from being exchanged between their networks. This is jeopardising one of the fundamental ideas behind the Internet – fast, free, inexpensive and simple exchange of e-mail between people and companies.

Time has become a very important factor in the fight against spam and computer viruses. A time lapse of two weeks between the discovery and blocking of computers that send spam is no longer acceptable. Because infected computers can spread hundreds of thousands of new spam messages in a 24-hour period, they must be blocked as soon as they are detected.

The computers that Telia will block are primarily those that have been infected with “trojans” which are being used, without the customer’s knowledge, to send enormous amounts of spam. Telia emphasises that it is not blocking these computers on a permanent basis. Telia, as soon as it comes into contact with the customer, will offer assistance to solve the problem and then remove the blocking procedure afterwards.

In March this year Telia introduced protection enabling Telia’s network to stop e-mail from known senders of electronic junk mail. The addresses are matched against a register that is prepared by the operator-independent organisation Mail Abuse Prevention System (MAPS). With this system, Telia estimated that it could stop between 50 and 75 percent of all spam before it reached customers. Recent calculations indicate that this goal has been reached, but with the recent dramatic surge in the total amount of spam, individual customers are often experiencing the exact opposite to an increasing extent.

In addition to previously implemented measures, Telia plans to introduce general protection against viruses in both incoming and outgoing mail, as well as protection against spam in e-mail that is addressed to receivers outside Telia's network.

"But the actions of Internet providers like us will not be enough," says Marie Ehrling. "Legislators, legal authorities, consumer organisations and everyone who uses the Internet must use every available means to stop the continuing spread of spam and viruses."

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