



## Opinion: ACMA : 1, PHONE SPAMMERS : 0

OPINION By Paul Ducklin, Sophos Head of technology  
APAC Last Friday (23rd October), the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) had something to get excited about when Brisbanes Federal Court agreed that two companies and three individuals should collectively be fined a whopping \$15, 750, 000 for SMS-related spamming offences.

The offenders were engaged in a scheme to obtain mobile numbers from members of dating websites using fake profiles. Once the numbers were obtained, the members were sent unsolicited messages offering the opportunity to chat via SMS at up to \$5 per message. However, the chat was not offered by genuine members of the dating websites but employees of the respondents companies. Interestingly, a week before this judgment, ACMA called for public feedback on its proposed new rules for blocking unwanted high-cost services delivered via SMS.

In order to create a system which protects consumers from SMS spam, Paul Ducklin, Sophos Head of Technology in Asia Pacific, believes there must be:

Greater consumer protection against unscrupulous mobile premium services;

Greater pressure on mobile phone operators to show some kind of consume-centric discrimination in the premium services they choose to partner with and;

Better default online security settings to protect young, vulnerable consumers from signing up to deceitful services.

You can read the full opinion piece on Pauls blog here: <http://www.sophos.com/blogs/duck/g/2009/10/26/phone-spammers-busted/>