

AVG's Threat Report highlights emerging trend of attacks via mobile social network connections

AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd, distributor of the AVG Internet and mobile security product range in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, today released AVG's Q1 2012 Community Powered Threat Report. The report highlights the growing use of mobile devices to connect with social networks and how this is fast becoming a preferred method for cyber criminals to spread malware, particularly on those devices running Android. Michael McKinnon, Security Advisor at AVG (AU/NZ), said: "AVG detected a big increase in the use of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter to target Android users. Cyber criminals are finding it very convenient to distribute their malware straight to a mobile device via these networks. The growth of the Android platform has been phenomenal, which has not gone unnoticed with cyber criminals who have discovered it to be a lucrative target for their malware. In 2011, Google had to remove over 100 malicious apps from the official Android market, Google Play." Social networks have become a key source of information and communication. Twitter now has more than 140 million active users[1]; and Facebook has over 845 million users[2], with some analysts expecting that figure to reach 1 billion this year[3]. The result: targeting those who use Facebook is like targeting around 14 percent of world's population or approximately 43 per cent of global internet users. Consider also that there are over 300 million Android phones already activated, with over 850,000 Android phones and tablets added to that number each day[4], and it is clear these two trends combined result in a new threat: infecting Android devices using social networks.

Most mobile devices are tied into operator billing systems making monetisation of malware a lot more effective than on traditional computer systems. All the attackers need to do is trick users to install a malicious app on their device through which they can then gather cash using the phone companies' billing systems by utilising premium SMS services. In many cases, this is done by charging low amounts on an infrequent basis so users don't even notice.

The Q1 2012 Community Powered Threat Report includes examples of this:

On Facebook, all it takes for a cyber criminal to attack is to set up a fake profile which downloads malware to a device and randomly invite Facebook users.

On Twitter, a cyber criminal creates a spam profile and then posts tweets containing shortened hyperlinks to malware using trending hashtags. The way in which Twitter works makes sure the tweet appears on the top of many people's Twitter feed.

About the report

The AVG Community Protection Network is an online neighborhood watch, where community members work to protect each other. Information about the latest threats is collected from customers who participate in the product improvement program and shared with the community to make sure everyone receives the best possible protection.

The AVG Community Powered Threat Report is based on the Community Protection Network traffic and data collected from participating AVG users over a three-month period, followed by analysis by AVG. It provides an overview of web, mobile devices, spam risks and threats. All statistics referenced are obtained from the AVG Community Protection Network.

AVG has focused on building communities that help millions of online participants support each other on computer security issues and actively contribute to AVG's research efforts.

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To download the summary of the Q1 2012 Community Powered Threat

Report: [www.avg.com/filedir/news/AVG\\_Community\\_Powered\\_Threat\\_Report\\_Q1\\_2012\\_summary.pdf](http://www.avg.com/filedir/news/AVG_Community_Powered_Threat_Report_Q1_2012_summary.pdf)

To download the full Q1 2012 Community Powered Threat Report: [www.avg.com/filedir/news/AVG\\_Community\\_Powered\\_Threat\\_Report\\_Q1\\_2012.pdf](http://www.avg.com/filedir/news/AVG_Community_Powered_Threat_Report_Q1_2012.pdf)

About AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd &mdash; [www.avg.com.au](http://www.avg.com.au)

Based in Melbourne, AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd, an Avalanche Technology Group company, distributes the AVG Internet Security and Mobile Security product range in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific.

AVG's mission is to simplify, optimise and secure the Internet experience, providing peace of mind to a connected world. AVG's powerful yet easy-to-use software and online services put users in control of their Internet experience. By choosing AVG's software and services, users become part of a trusted global community that benefits from inherent network effects, mutual protection and support. AVG has grown its user base to approximately 108 million active users as of December 31, 2011 and offers a product portfolio that targets the consumer and small business markets and includes Internet security, PC performance optimisation, online backup, mobile security and identity protection.

Talk to Us

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Media resources, including logos, box shots, screen shots etc., are available online at: <http://www.avg.com.au/media/>

Join the AVG Community for information, video content and pictures: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/officialavg/sets/>

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[2] <http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22>

[3] [http://connect.icrossing.co.uk/facebook-hit-billion-users-summer\\_7709](http://connect.icrossing.co.uk/facebook-hit-billion-users-summer_7709)

[4] <https://plus.google.com/u/0/112599748506977857728/posts/Btey7rJBaLF>