Security
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# Phishing with Swine Flu as bait

by Elinor Mills



Phishers and spammers have caught Swine Flu fever and are exploiting fears around the outbreak to try to sell pharmaceutical products or steal information, security experts said Tuesday.

The e-mail scams have a subject line related to the Swine Flu and typically contain either a link to a phishing Web site or an attachment that contains malicious code, the US-CERT said in **an advisory**.

One scam features a malicious Adobe PDF document titled "Swine influenza frequently asked questions.pdf," according to Symantec. The malicious PDF file has been recognized as "Bloodhound.Exploit.6" and it drops malicious InfoStealer code onto the victim's computer, the company said.

One spam with a subject line "Suspected Mexican flu toll hits 81" includes news headlines from legitimate agencies and asks recipients whether they are located in the U.S. or Mexico and if they know anyone affected by the outbreak. Recipients are asked to go to a Web site to fill in a form or reply to the e-mail and include their e-mail address, address, and phone number, according to a post on **Symantec's blog**.

From: header details removed
Date: header details removed
To: header details removed
Subject: Suspected Mexico flu toll hits 81

The Mexican authorities say 81 people are now thought to have been killed by an outbreak of a human swine flu virus.

A new flu virus suspected of killing as many as 81 people in Mexico has the potential to become a pandemic, the World Health Organization's chief says.

Are you in Mexico or the US? Do you know someone who has been affected by the outbreak? Tell us your experiences by filling in the form below.

Fill the form

Or reply back with details
Name:
* Your e-mail address:
Address:
* Phone:

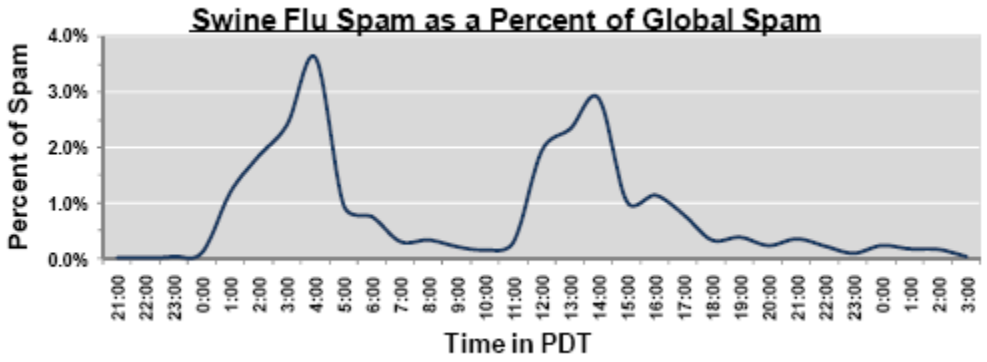
One e-mail scam exploiting the Swine Flu outbreak asks recipients for their contact information.
(Credit: symantec)

McAfee Avert Labs also has information on Swine Flu-related spam **on its site**.

Cisco IronPort estimates that Swine Flu-related spam accounted for up to 4 percent of the worldwide total at its peak.

CERT tips for protecting against scams are to avoid following unsolicited Web links or attachments in e-mail messages and maintain up-to-date anti-virus software. More information is on the CERT site **here** and in a **downloadable PDF**.

For information about the Swine Flu visit the **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site**.




At its peak on Monday, Swine Flu-related spam represented nearly 4 percent of the worldwide total on Monday, according to Cisco IronPort.
(Credit: Cisco IronPort)

Elinor Mills covers Internet security and privacy. She joined CNET News in 2005 after working as a foreign correspondent for Reuters in Portugal and writing for The Industry Standard, the IDG News Service, and the Associated Press. E-mail Elinor.

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