

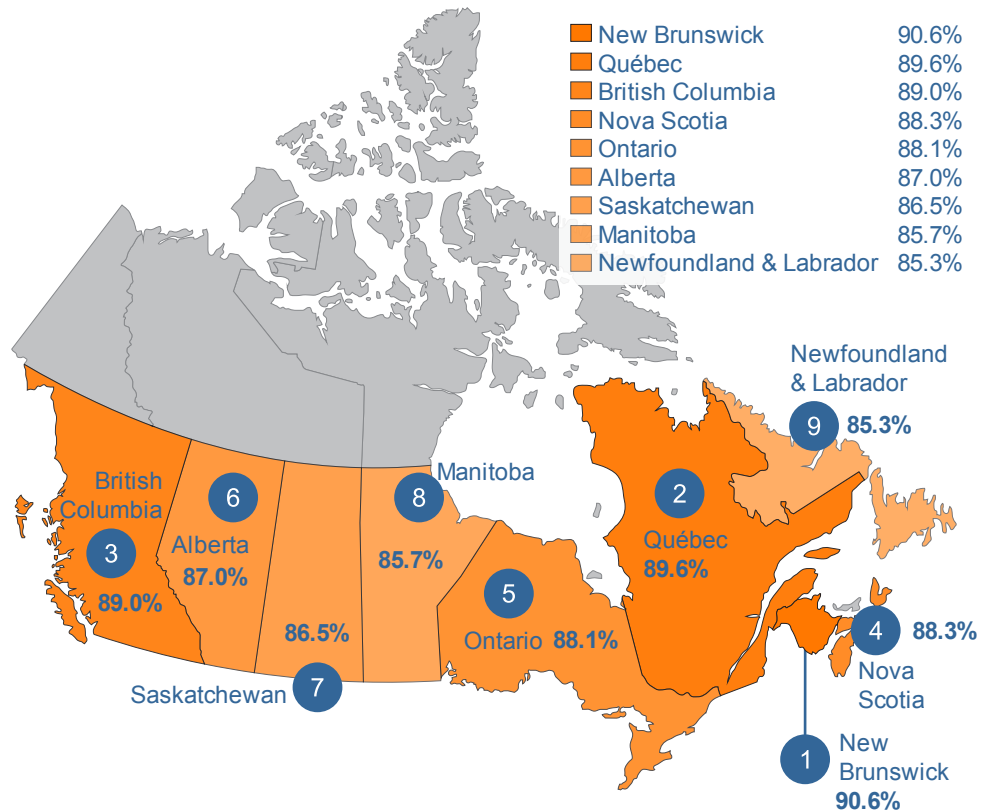
MessageLabs Intelligence Special Report Spam rates in Canadian Provinces

September 2009



Local Analysis

- From coast to coast, spammers are attacking Canadian in-boxes but the most and least spammed provinces can be found in the East. In New Brunswick 90.6 percent of email is spam while in Newfoundland & Labrador 85.3 percent of email is spam.
- The average number of spam messages received per user per day in Canada is approximately 49.
- Seven of the nine Canadian provinces receive spam in excess of the current global spam rate of 86.4 percent.
- In Canada, the most spammed sector is Retail, followed by Marketing & Media, Professional Services, Manufacturing and Recreation. The least spammed are: Healthcare, Mineral & Fuel, Education, Engineering and Wholesale.



Global Analysis

- The areas that are subjected to the highest levels of spam are generally those locations that are populated with a higher density of small-to-medium sized businesses. Similarly, the least spammed places are often home to some of the largest companies.
- Between four million and six million computers scattered across the globe have been compromised by cybercriminals without the user's knowledge. These computers now form robotic networks – Botnets, which are controlled by cybercriminals and used to send out more than 87% of all unsolicited mail, equating to approximately 151 billion emails a day
- The global spam rate for September 2009 is 86.4 percent, but Canadian businesses are receiving more than their fair share, with levels reaching 90.6 percent.
- Spammers have preferred target industries with the Engineering and Education sector being the top global targets with spam levels reaching more than 93 percent.

Quote

“Some Canadian businesses are experiencing significantly high spam levels of more than 90 percent, well above the global average of 86.4 percent,” said Paul Wood, MessageLabs Intelligence Senior Analyst, Symantec. “Even in challenging economic times, cybercriminals continue to plague businesses with unprecedented levels of unsolicited mail and push them to spend valuable bandwidth and resources on dealing with spam.”

MessageLabs Intelligence Top Tips to Stamp out Spam

- **Protect your email address** - using your primary email address anywhere on the web puts it at risk of being picked up by spammers so be careful where you use it
- **Watch out for the checkboxes** – when you buy or sign up for something online, opt out of being contacted by third parties, you don't know where your address will end up.
- **Don't use the reply, remove or forward options** – acknowledging the spam email using any of these options only validates your email address and can lead to more spam.
- **Use an unusual name** – if you use an email address with numbers in it for instance, you are less likely to receive spam. Spammers often use directories of common names to guess email addresses, e.g. ajones@company.com, bjones@company.com, etc.
- **Avoid clicking on any links in spam messages** – the addresses of links are frequently disguised and often serve only to confirm your existence to spammers. Same with unsubscribe links.

- **Avoid downloading pictures in spam email** – these can identify you as a recipient even if you just view the message in the preview pane. You can view your email as text to prevent this, or you can set your email security to block external images.
- **Use a spam filtering service** – Don't let spam get close to your inbox by having it filtered out beforehand by your ISP or by using an anti-spam service.

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. More information is available at www.messagelabs.com/intelligence

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