

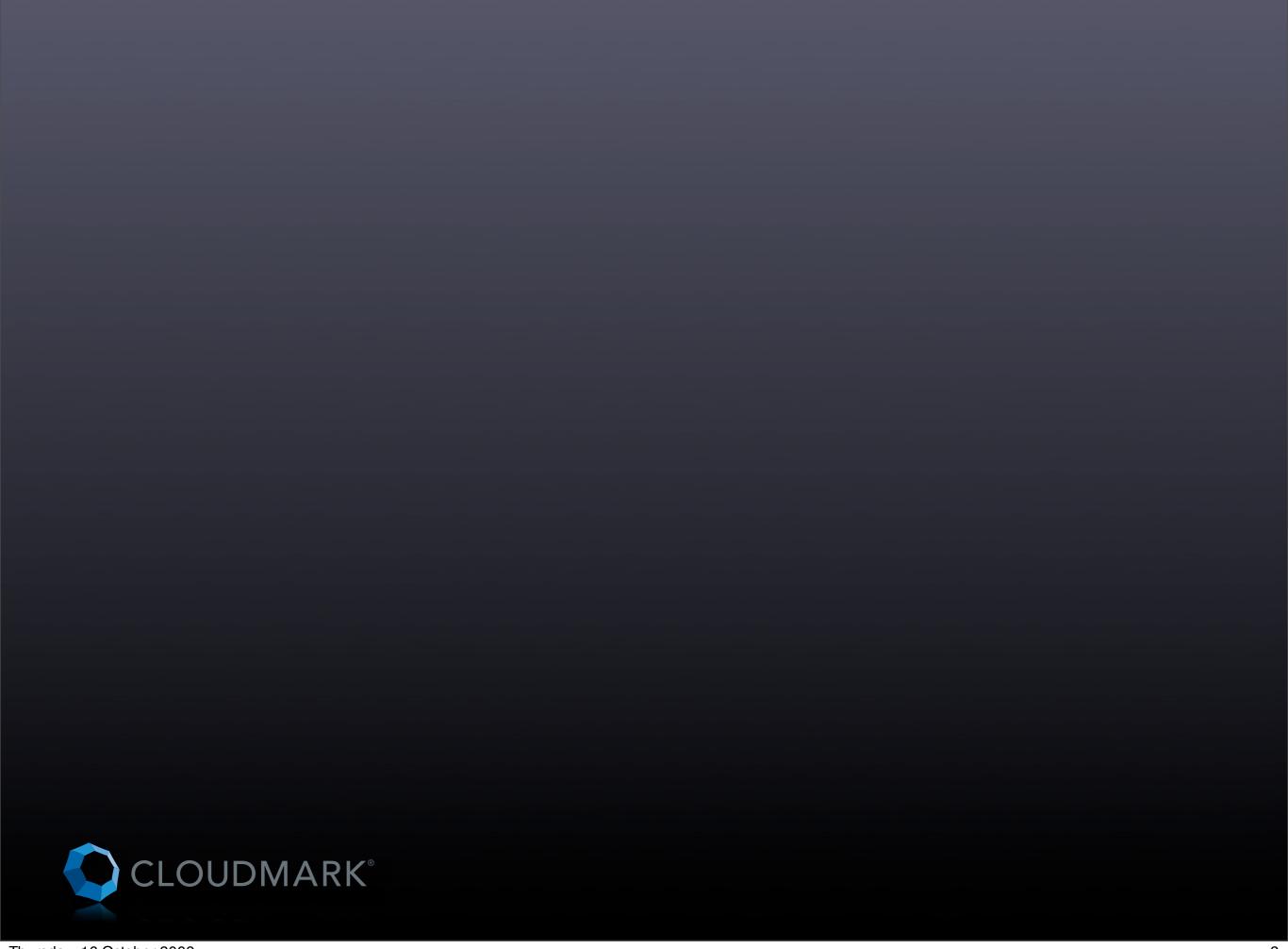
The Evolution of Spam and Messaging Security

Neil Cook

Head of Technology Services, EMEA, Cloudmark, Inc.

ESNOG, Barcelona October, 2008

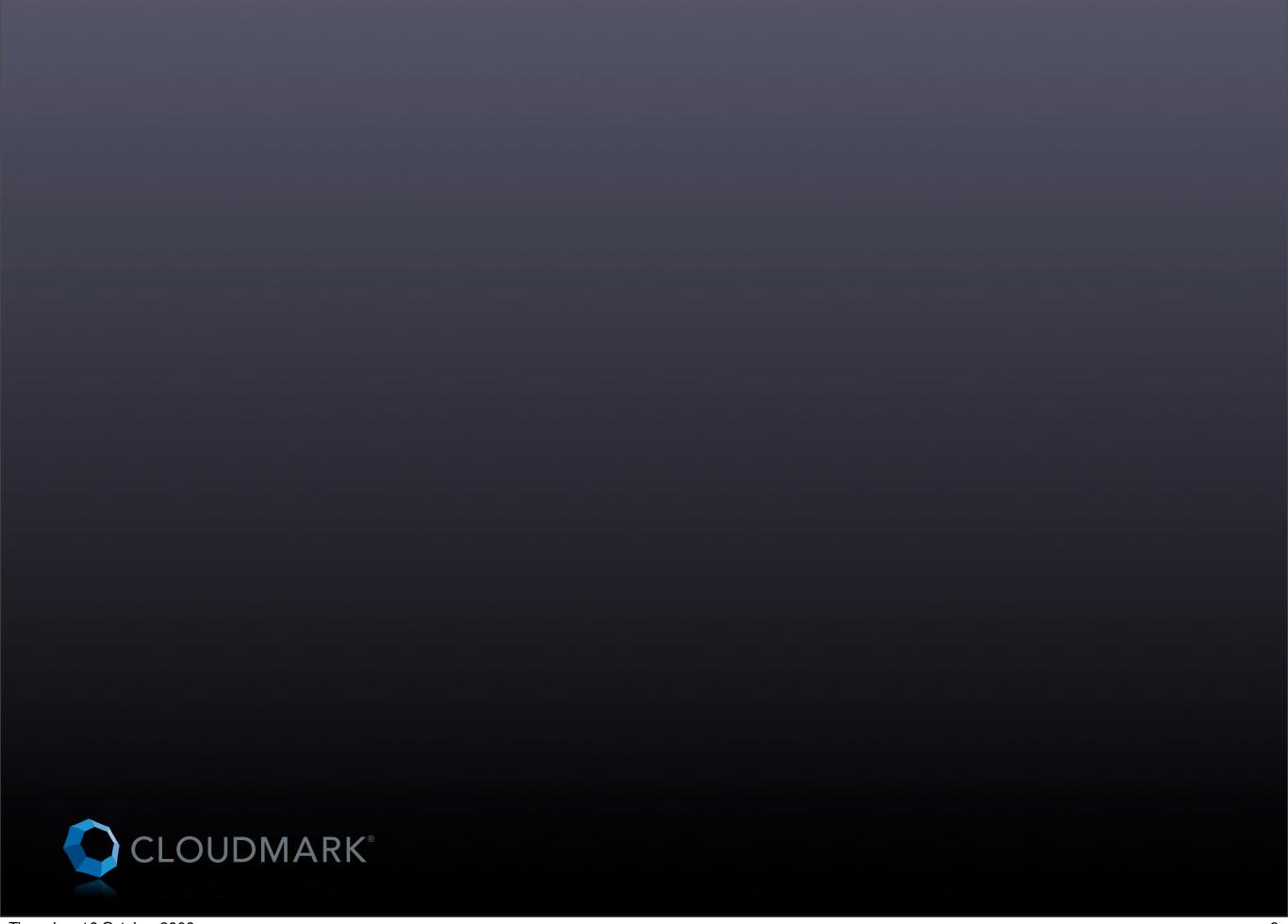




A Glossary of Recent Security Terms

phishing, pharming, attack surface, botnets, bot herders,
packet inspection, honeypots, spyware, rootkits,
zero day, underground economy, naive bayesian, vishing,
two factor authentication, active scripting, spear phishing, pentests,
pretexting, differentiated security, adware,
DNS amplification, zombies, click fraud

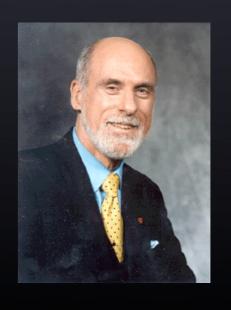




Industry Luminaries on the State of Security

"... Internet is at serious risk ... botnets could eat the Internet."

- Vint Cerf, Father of Internet World Economic Forum





Industry Luminaries on the State of Security

"... even the most innocent of websites can ruin your life ..."

- Dr Jose Nazario, Author

Defense and Detection Strategies Against Internet Worms

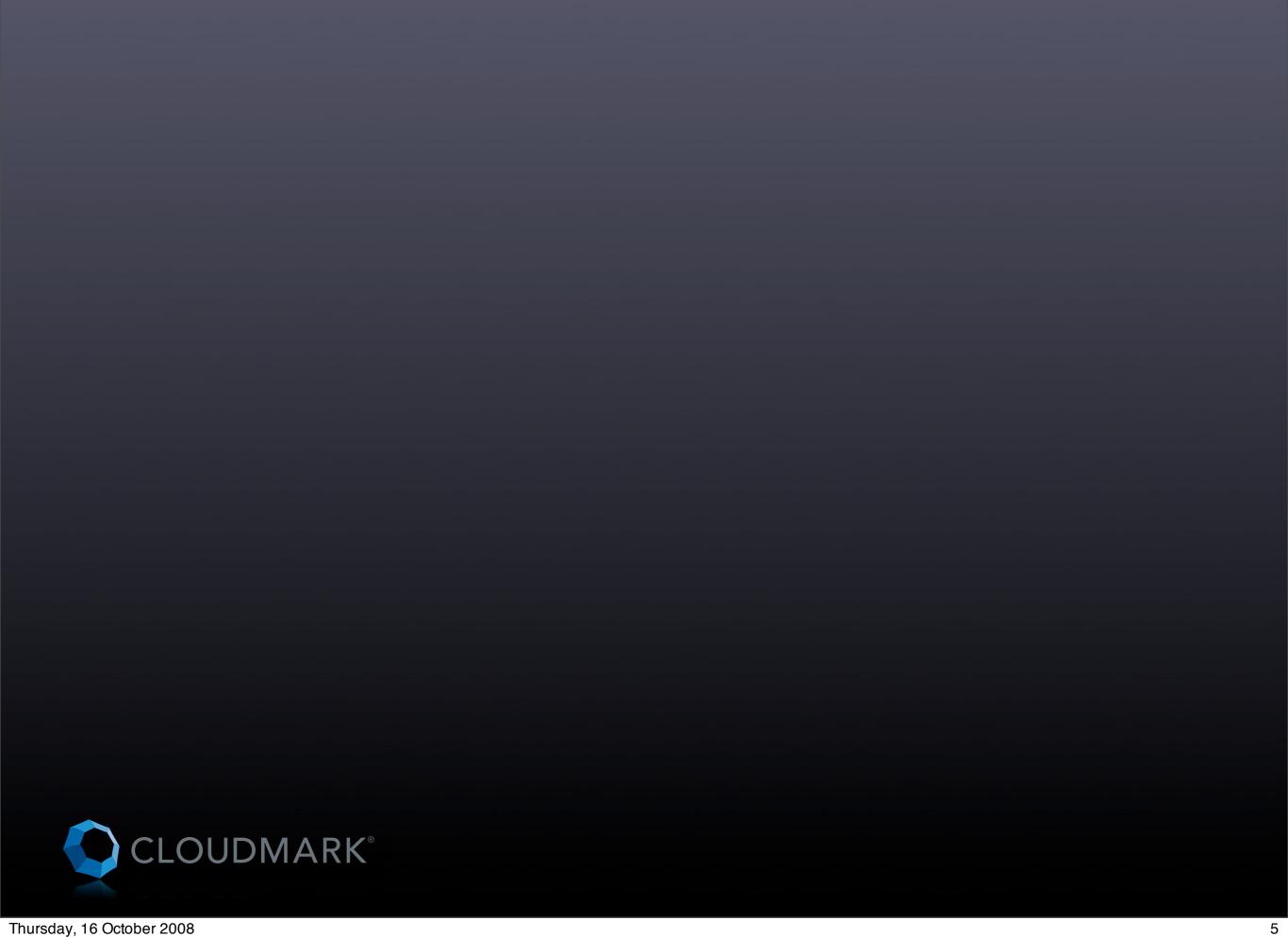






Should we be really really afraid?





Evolution and Future Trends



Evolution and Future Trends

Computer security is a very splintered subject.
Some coherence would be nice.



Spam is a microcosm of computer security. No, really!



Analysis of Evolution of Spam

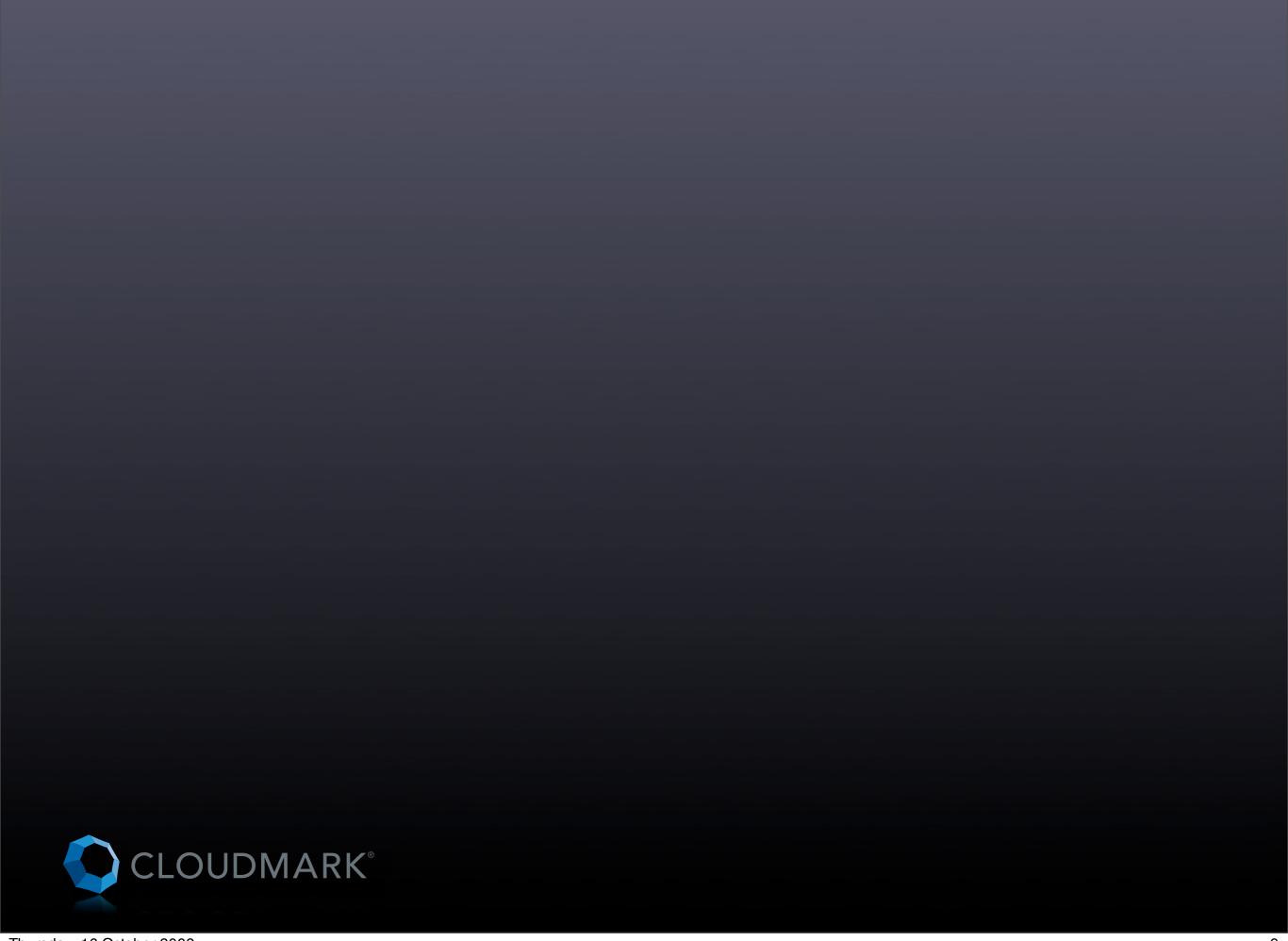
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Fundamental Principles of Computer Security

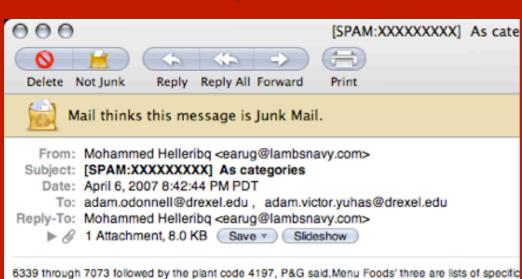


Everyone can observe spam.





Spam



Nutro Natural Choice; Paws; Presidents Choice; Price Chopper; Priority; 'Cuts and gravy' food sold in d

which occurred Wednesday, was followed that

Fire Mountain Beverage Company

FB VG.PK

This could be the next HANS or FIZ
Which generated 13000% plus returns

Breaking news expected Cet in Before the Rush on Mar 9th

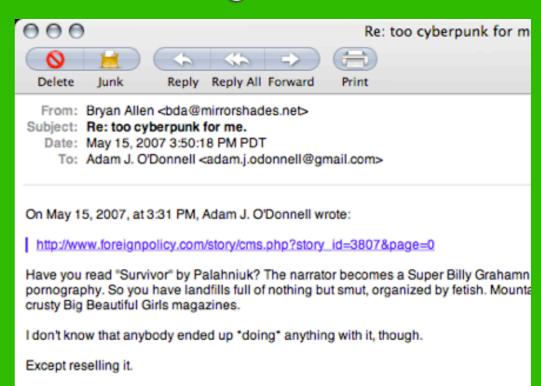
CURRENTLY PRICED AT: \$.0 2
EXPECTED: \$1.50
GET IN FBVG MONDAY

manufactu

United States, Canada and Mexico. The pet food was sold by stores operated by military has imposed president and chief executive officer. However, the recalled products found a cause for the sickness." Jersey, Henderson said. Henderson said the company received an provinces have hundreds of religion Sophistacat; Special Kitty; Springfield Pride; Sprout; the company's president and chief executive office treated for gun shot wounds and other injuries,

Henderson said. Menu Foods said it makes pet foods for 17 of the top 20 North ranging in age from 13 My True Friend; Wegmans; Western Family; White Rose; and Winn Dixie. accused of harboring insurge

Legitimate

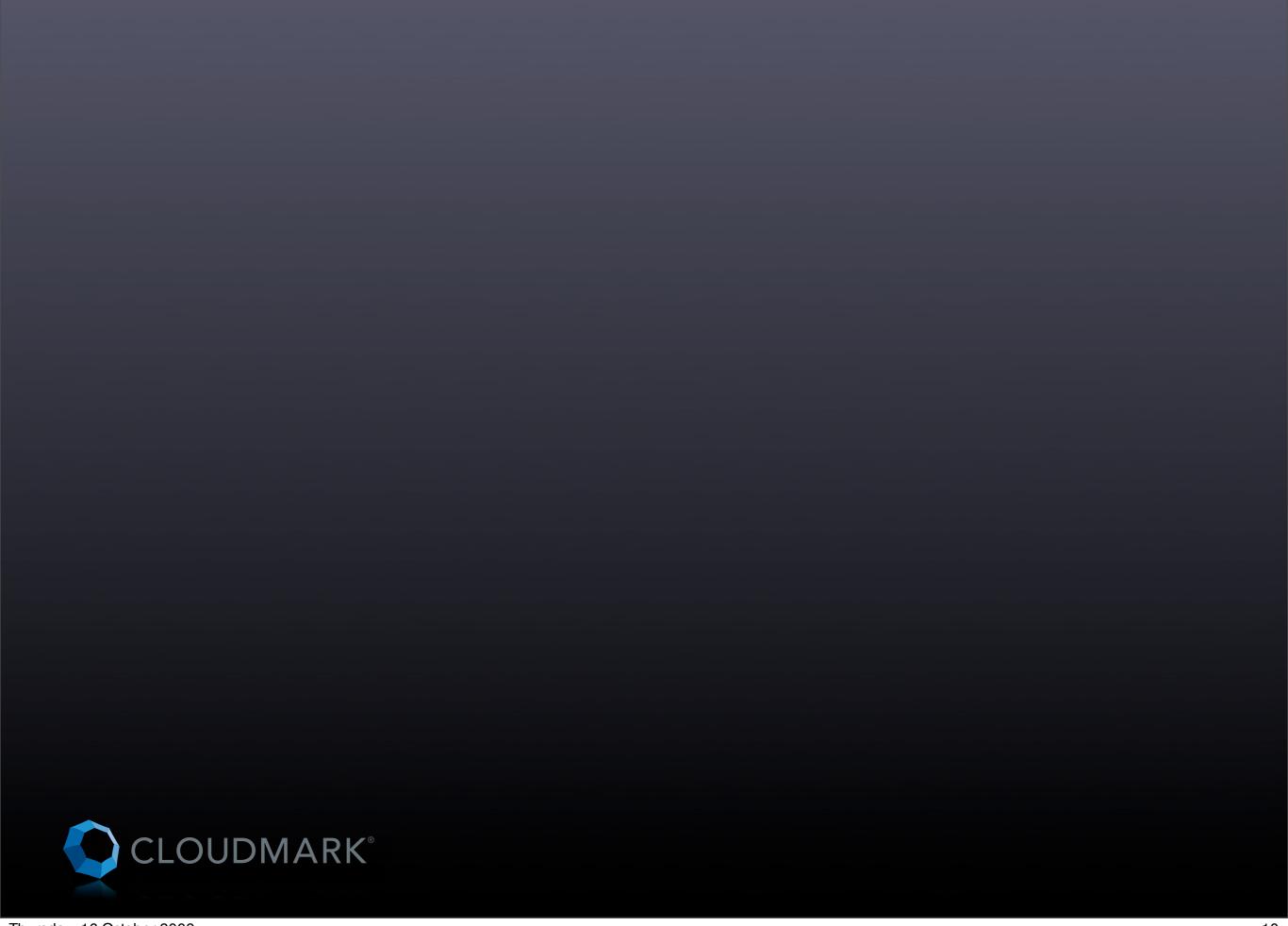


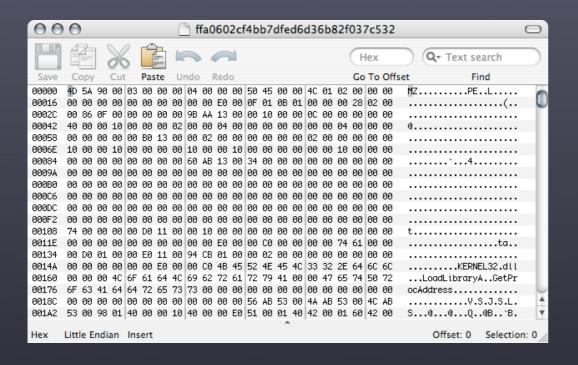
Is it weird that's the first thing I thought of when I saw pictures of obsolete hardware? :P

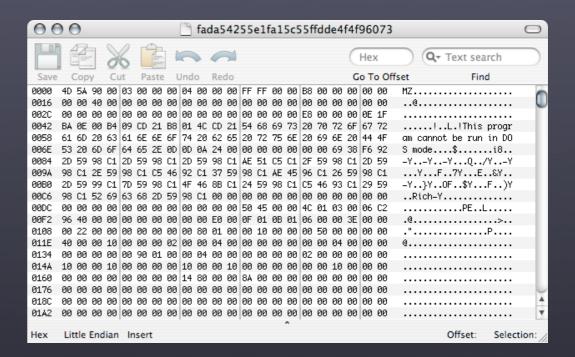
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3807&page=10

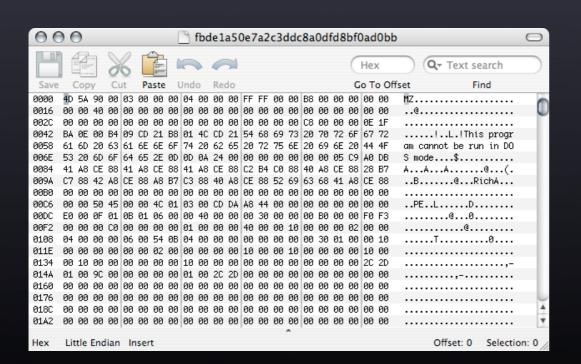
Most of which was probably manufactured... in China. -- bda

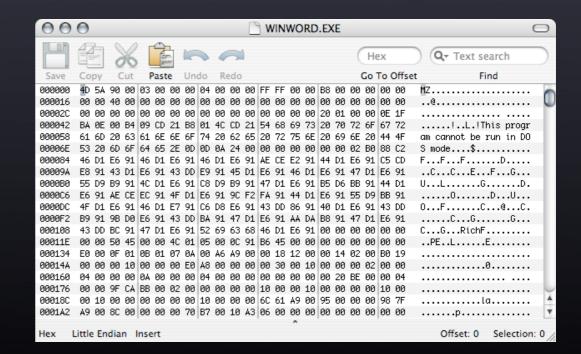




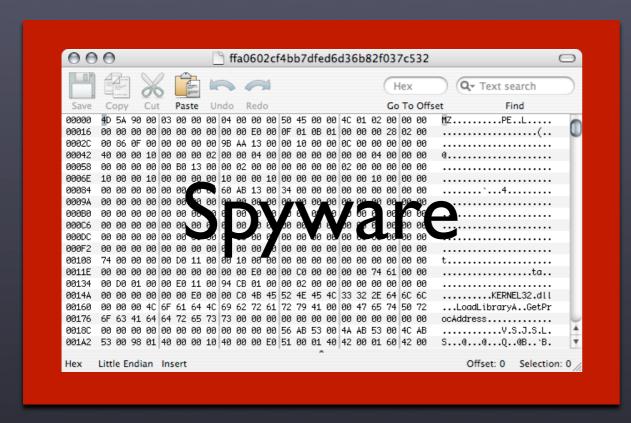




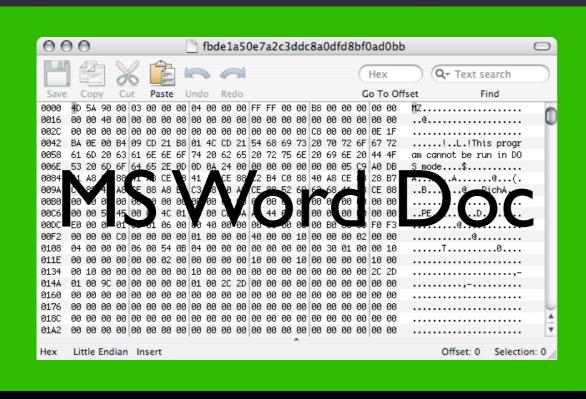








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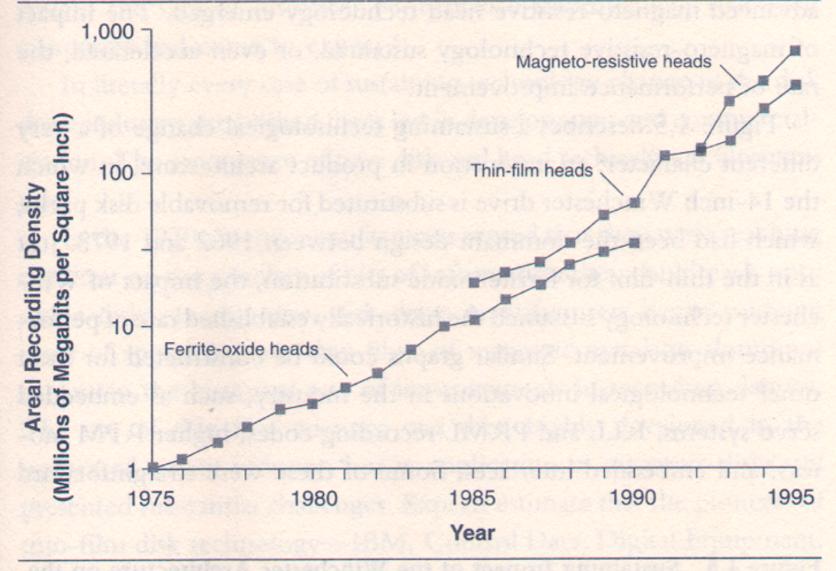
Spam is highly evolved.



Spam is still here.



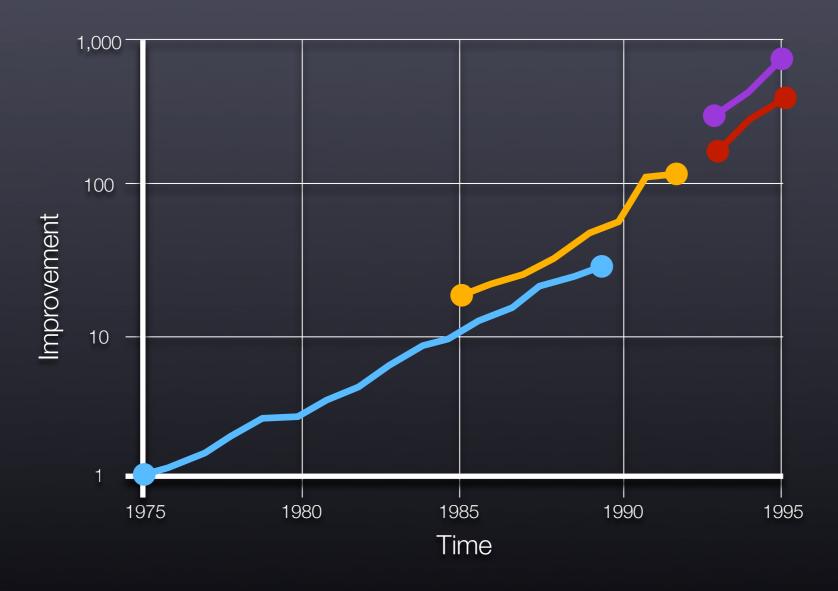
Figure 1.4 Impact of New Read-Write Head Technologies in Sustaining the Trajectory of Improvement in Recording Density



Source: Data are from various issues of Disk/Trend Report.



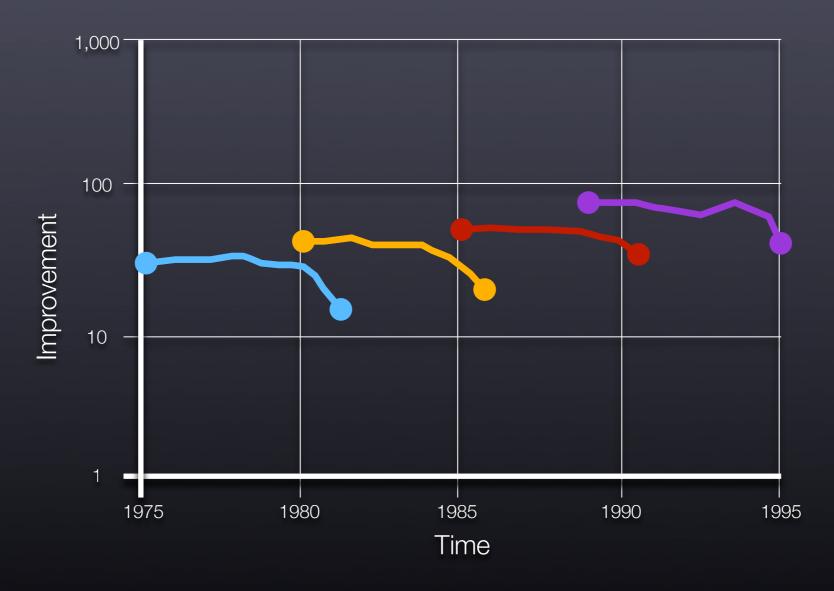
Moore's Law



Innovation A Innovation B Innovation C Innovation D



The Security Curve



Innovation A Innovation B Innovation C Innovation D



Fundamental Principle #1

Good security must thrive in an environment that is intentionally hostile to it.



The focus of security should be the attacker.



The motivation of attacker is to make money.



We can cast the security problem as a problem of economics.



Fundamental Principle #2

The Optimal Target Selection Strategy

The attacker selects the most valuable and least defended targets.



Spam is BIG...

...because email is the #1 Internet application and was designed with no security.



Microsoft Windows is attacked more...

... because 96% of the computers in the world run Windows, and security is poor.

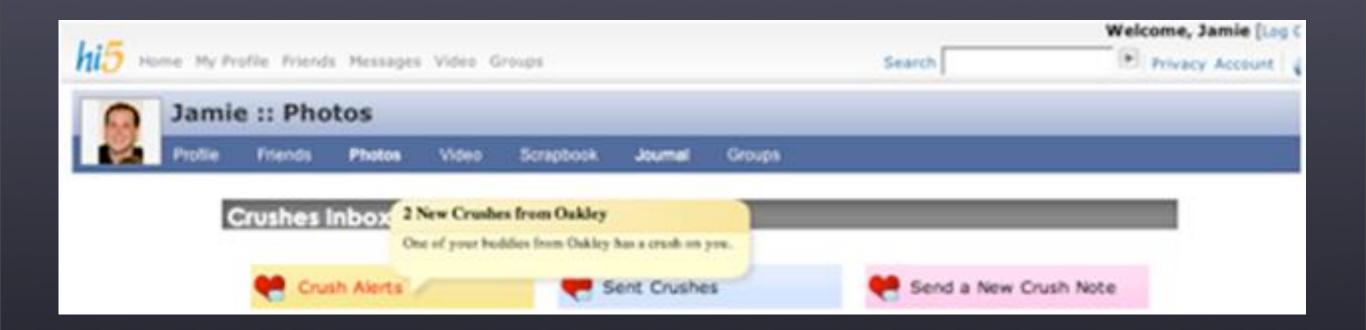


Social networks are being attacked...

... because they are the top websites, and are poorly defended



Social Networking Spam



Someone has a crush on you! www.YouGotCrushedOn.com
Someone has a crush on you! www.YouGotCrushedOn.com



Categories of Spam



Categories of Spam

- ▶ 45% of spam in 2006 was pharmaceutical spam
- > 33% of spam in 2007 was stock spam
- 2% of spam in 2007 was website hosting offers



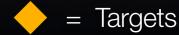
A Graph for Optimal Target Selection



A Graph for Optimal Target Selection

- Targets lie in the top right quadrant
- Targets move left on X axis as security is introduced
- Targets move up on Y axis as services become popular







The attacker is a shrewd investor, reassesses as conditions change.



We examined spam wars from an economic perspective.



Fundamental Principle #3

The struggle between attacker and defender takes two forms:

- 1. Attrition Warfare
- 2. Transmutation



Attrition Warfare in Spam

URL cycling and listing

From: pedagogy <lesliepersonnel@85.141.153.178>

Subject: Junior It is the absolute best choose.

Date: May 25, 2006 11:42:30 AM PDT

To: ricochet-announce-request@vipul.net

embodiment scimitar and repertoire hear even tess.

Here it is: http://wckxjjiki7dqnqe8lq02k2vpk2v722k.porodinehb.com/

Have fun, Estela

From: 野玫瑰 <okmm@tom.com>

Subject: (图)你的红颜知己!

Date: July 13, 2005 1:30:56 PM PDT

To: ricochet-announce-request@vipul.net

Reply-To: okmm@tom.com

(图)你的红颜知己! http://41800.kuw.cn/ From: Leslie Westbrook <tvoeslcpef@organic-ingredients.com>

Subject: StormPay Registration Confirmation Date: August 8, 2006 9:16:52 PM PDT

To: bgdarnel@vipul.net

Icrease Your S"exual Desire and S"perm volume by 500%

L'onger o"rgasms - The longest most intense o"rgasms of your life

Multiple o"rgasms - Cum again and again S'PUR-M is The Newest and The Safest Way

100% N"atural and No Side Effects - in contrast to well-known brands.

Experience three times longer o"rgasms World Wide shipping within 24 hours

Clisk here http://www.astronautwrestling.info



Number of Domains Used for Spam in 2003?

45,000

Cost of these domains: USD \$31,000



Number of Domains Used for Spam in 2007?

1,6878,00

Cost of these domains: USD \$9.8M



Number of Blogspot/Redirector URLs Used for Spam in 2008?

Unlimited?

Cost of these domains: USD **\$0**



Fundamental Principle #4

Attrition warfare happens when an attacker figures out a way to exploit a defense strategy at a fixed cost.



Average time to discover a new spam domain in 2003?

8 minutes



Average time to discover a new spam domain in 2007?

22 seconds



Many Types of Attrition Wars in Spam



Many Types of Attrition Wars in Spam

- IP Reputation tracking
- Bayesian Noise Elimination
- Hash Busting



Many Types of Attrition Wars in Spam

- IP Reputation tracking
- Bayesian Noise Elimination
- Hash Busting

Whoever had the fastest tempo won the attrition war



The most common way to achieve high tempo is automation.

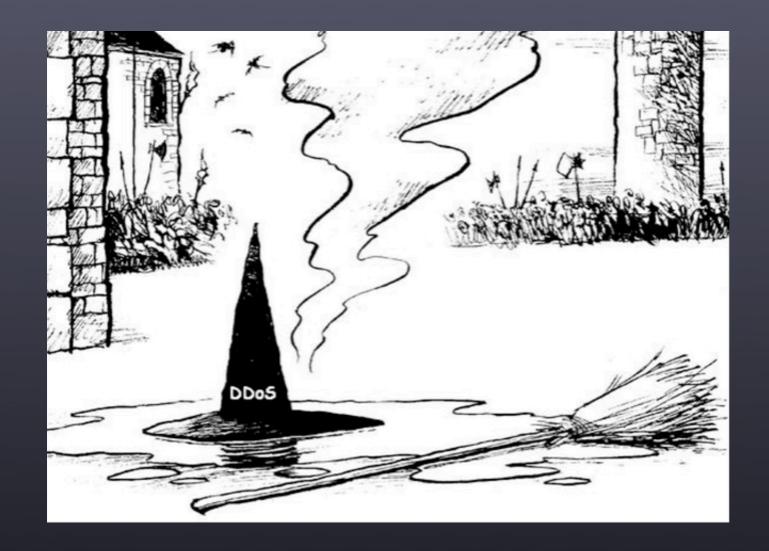
But the cost of automating different strategies can vary quite a bit.



Fundamental Principle #5

Effective attrition attack strategies are cheaper to automate than their defense counterparts, and vice versa.





DDoS space is set in a war of attrition.



What happens when attrition warfare is no longer profitable to the attacker?



What happens when attrition warfare is no longer profitable to the attacker?

- Attacker can find a new target, eg spammers are moving to blogs, social networks, cell phones.
- Transmutate.



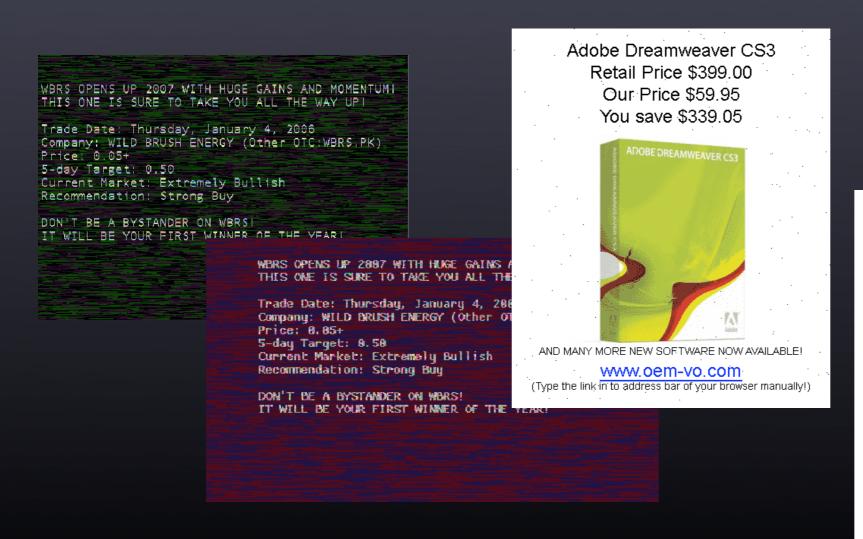
Fundamental Principle #6

Transmutation is an new attack strategy that steps outside the parameters of the defense.

It is a response to a loss in war of attrition.



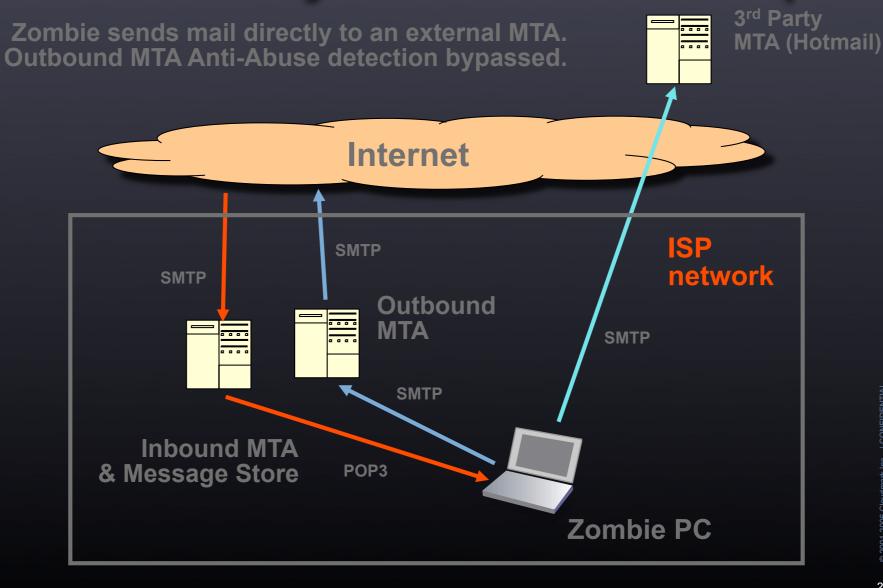
Pump and dump stock spam defeated many anti-spam systems.







Botnets made Spam Filtering based IP Reputation a lot more difficult - particularly Outbound Spam



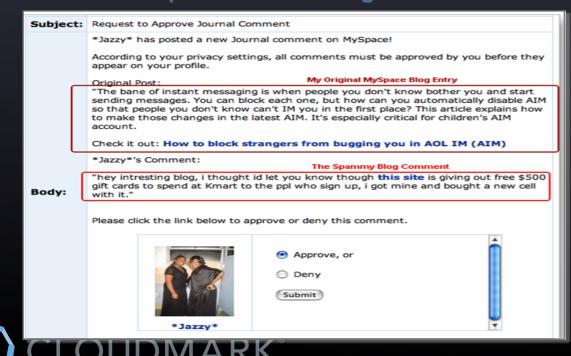
CLOUDMARK®

Social Networking Spam friend request Spam

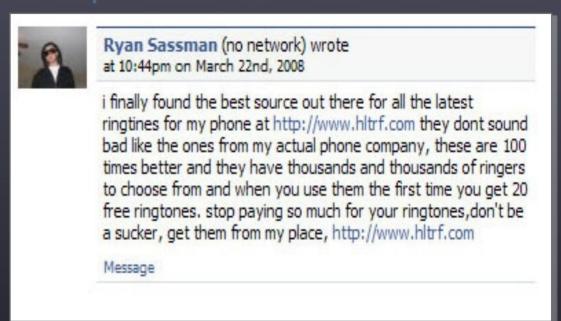
Fictitious "Friend Request"



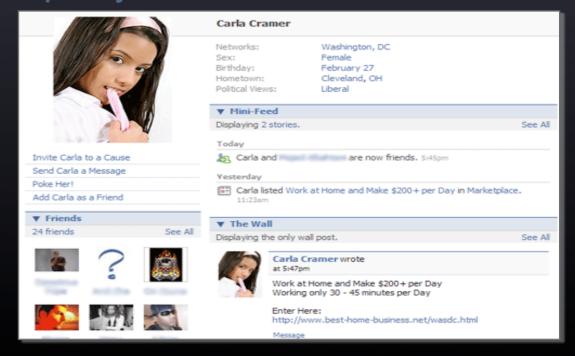
Comment Spam and Phishing



Wall Spam



Spammy Profiles



Transmutation is a creative process.

It has an R&D cost.





Fundamental Principle #7

A successful defense to transmutation is to turn it into a war of attrition

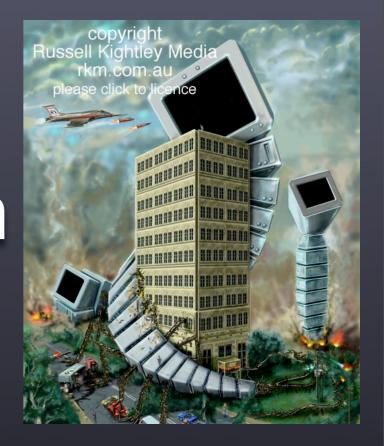


Fundamental Principle #8

Target bounding strategies cripple infrastructure and provide no security.



Internet worms work by exploiting vulnerabilities in network softare.



Sasser exploited XP in 2004, spread at an alaming rate, caused Delta to cancel flights, shutdown some satellite communications, Sampo bank to close 130 branches.



Transmutation in worms. Spam + Social Engineering



"230 dead as Storm batters Europe"

"Radical Muslim drinking enemies blood"

"Chinese missile shot down USA satellite"

"Fidel Castro dead."



Storm worm defeated by antispam systems like Cloudmark and Postini running high tempo attrition wars on binary content in email.

NEWS



Storm worm strikes again on Easter claiming

Ericka Chickowski Apr 11 2007 09:47

AV/E

This



Security researchers discovered a spate of new variants of the Storm worm making the rounds this weekend through emails reporting fictitious news of the United States attacking Iran.

Antis

The scam emails on the loose include mangled subject lines, such as "USA Just Have Started World War III," "Missle Strike: The USA kills more then 20000 Iranian citizen," "Israel Just Have Started World War III" and "USA Missile Strike: Iran War just have started" - all with malicious programs with enticing names such as "movie.exe."

'Sill Var DNS Hac

Nev

Esto

According to Adam O'Donnell, senior research scientist with Cloudmark, the latest analysis of the malicious binaries showed that they are variants of the storm worm that first made its big splash with millions of infections in January.

"This is the exact same thing," he said. "The attackers use a methodology where they send out an executable attachment associated with some kind of major news story, or fictitious news story, to get people interested enough to load up the virus.

When the virus is installed, it creates a peer-to-peer network. Most of the attackers are interested in setting

OUDMARK®

More Transmutations: Indirect/Redirect Virus/Spam

http://charleshenegar4626.blogspot.com

http://marionblakeman405.blogspot.com

http://james-dfarley3237.blogspot.com



Fundamental Principle #9

There's always the potential for a new transmutation whose nature is impossible to predict.



You can predict the infrastructure targets at risk



You can predict the infrastructure targets at risk

- Use optimal target selection strategy often
- For example: mobile messaging will be attacked when e-commerce models appear. Or when the cost of sending mobile spam messages becomes economically viable.



You cannot predict the form of attacks



You cannot predict the form of attacks

- Specific approaches and attacks can't be predicted.
- These attacks will transmutate rapidly as you create responses to them.



Maintain a high tempo security process internally



Maintain a high tempo security process internally

- Select the highest tempo security partners and proxies.
- Speed up evaluation of proposed security processes.
- Avoid target bounding approaches.
- Create risk mitigation models for collateral damage.



Thankyou

