SCAM CALLER PLAGUE HITS AUSTRALIA: ACMA

ACMA MOVES TO DISRUPT SCAM TELEPHONE CALLS PLAGUE

New research on unsolicited calls in Australia shows that more than half of Australian adults have received scam calls daily or weekly, according to the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

The ACMA, which undertook the research, released details on scam calls on Wednesday as the terms of reference for an Australian Government project to reduce harmful scam activity on telco networks were announced by the Australian Government.

The Scam Technology Project, led by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) with representation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Australian Cyber Security Centre, will explore ways to disrupt scam activity on telco networks.

The ACMA established the Scam Technology Project in December 2018, to explore technical solutions addressing the rise in scam calls over Australian telecommunications networks.

Chair of the Scam Technology Project Reference Group, Fiona Cameron, said that the project represented a show of unity from Australian government agencies to minimise the scammer scourge.

"Scam activity is highly organised, increasingly sophisticated and undermines consumer confidence in communications services," Cameron said.

"This project will investigate what can be done to disrupt scam communications activity, including possible consumer or network-based solutions like call blocking and network traffic authentication protocols."

Data shared by the ACCC's Scamwatch service shows that the number of scams being reported, and the amount of money lost to scams is increasing.

Cameron said it's important for government and industry to respond to consumer concerns and implement a strong action plan.

"Industry, especially telco service providers, has an important role to play as it is responsible for the delivery of frontline consumer safeguards.

"We need to be better informed and armed to slow down the scammer tide. We also need to be aware that scammers listen and learn, and adapt their behaviour to suit the environment."

A discussion paper will be released by the ACMA in the coming weeks seeking views from consumers, industry and government.

The ACMA says it will continue to engage with key stakeholders in the coming months, with a final report to be completed in December.

Peter Dinham

Corinium
connected thinking

Chief Data & Analytics Officer Sydney

2-4 April 2019

NETCOMM CLAIMS FIRST PRODUCTS TO GAIN GFAST CERTIFICATION

Two of NetComm's Gfast 212MHz Fibre-to-the-Distribution-Point products have become the first products in the global market to achieve full interoperability certification under Broadband Forum's (BBF) ID337i2 Gfast/212MHz interoperability test plan.

NetComm's NDD-4110 Gfast distribution point unit (DPU) and NDD-0300 Gfast network termination device (NTD) have been officially certified as being compliant with the BBF ID337i2 Gfast/212MHz interoperability test plan following testing by the University of New Hampshire Interoperability Laboratory (UNH-IOL).

Certification means network operators can confidently select the NetComm Gfast devices for use in conjunction with similarly certified devices from other vendors.

The Gfast 212MHz profile enables gigabit broadband to be delivered over existing twisted-pair copper lead-in cables.

"This is a fantastic achievement from our engineering teams and underlines our position as a world leader in the development of Gfast 212MHz technology," said NetComm chief engineering officer Adrian Macarthur-King.

"Our engineers have worked hard alongside the BBF, UNH-IOL and the industry's leading Gfast silicon technology partners to reach this goal of Gfast 212MHz interoperability for our key FTTdp products.

"NetComm has engineered innovative products and worked closely with industry partners through a series of Plugfest events at UNH-IOL to refine the test plan, identify issues in the implementation and develop and deploy improvements to the products to achieve the highest possible level of interoperability.

"Achieving this accreditation now means that operators around the world will be able to use these market leading NetComm products alongside Gfast equipment from any other vendor that also achieves the same BBF interoperability accreditation."

Last year, NBN Co selected NetComm to supply NTDs and DPUs.

Last month, NetComm agreed to be acquired by US-based Casa Systems for $161 million.

Stephen Withers

AUSTRALIA LEADS THE WORLD IN 5G ADOPTION SAYS DELOITTE

The latest 2019 TMT Predictions from Deloitte show that Australia leads the global race to adopt 5G, with eSports striding ahead, AI for better customer service, quantum computing as a major revenue opportunity and more among other prognostications.

Global consulting firm Deloitte recently unleashed its latest 2019 TMT Predictions (Technology, Media and Telecommunications) report.

Deloitte predicts that 2019 will "be the year 5G arrives in scale across the globe, providing the fastest mobile Internet speeds the world has ever seen. Deloitte forecasts that 25 network operators will launch 5G services globally in 2019, and that is expected to double in 2020".

"The high data speeds and low latency 5G provides could spur the next evolution of health care, smart transport, manufacturing and nearly every industry that relies on connectivity."

Partner, Technology, Media and Telecommunications, Peter Corbett, said: "5G will transform the way we live, work and play in 2019; the prospects are really exciting. What's more exciting is that we predict Australia will be one of the fastest countries to commercially rollout 5G, and put its power in the hands of every day Australians."

Smartphones

We're told that more than a million 5G-ready handsets are forecast to be sold worldwide in 2019, and Australia is predicted to sell 50,000 of those. This is a considerable stake in the global figure, and is largely attributed to Australia's 5G infrastructure readiness.

Corbett added: "Australian network operators have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into 5G infrastructure, laying the foundations for the technology and enabling Australia to lead the pack".

Fixed wireless

Deloitte predicts a million 5G fixed wireless access devices will be installed around the world in 2019, with Australia predicted to install 10,000 devices by year's end.

Corbett continued: "We also expect to see more partnerships between 5G fixed wireless service providers and city councils to mount small cells on light poles and other sites. This will allow telcos to access small cell locations through a city, without having to acquire expensive real estate".

The 5G device landscape

As 5G rolls out across Australia, Deloitte predicts a new wave of innovative and 5G-ready Internet of Things devices to hit the market.

Here, Corbett noted: "These innovative products will include 5G enabled smart home appliances, sensors and vehicles. 5G will enable a more efficient and diverse smart appliance ecosystem that connects all aspects of our lives.

"There are many opportunities and challenges ahead for the rollout of 5G, and customers will need to be patient.

"However, we predict 2019 will indeed be the year of commercial rollout, and early bird customers will enjoy enhanced speeds from their home, and potentially on the go within connected pockets of major cities."

eSports

Deloitte predicts a global increase in popularity for eSports, and 2019 will see existing leagues expand and new leagues established. Analysts expect revenues from the global eSports market to reach US$1 billion in 2019, largely driven by advertising, broadcasting rights and league expansion.

In Australia, eSports is predicted to continue its stride towards becoming a mainstream form of entertainment in 2019, and sport federations and commercial organisations will align themselves more closely to the sport.

Partner, Technology, Media and Telecommunications, Leora Nevezie, said: "Games such as Fortnite have taken the world by storm, and we're seeing a rapidly growing base of players and fans in Australia.

"Last year's inaugural Melbourne eSports Open attracted 12,000 fans in person, and more than 12 million views across Twitter, Facebook and Reddit which is quite impressive.

"There is a natural synergy with eSport and telcos, and we predict that this year we will see telcos explore eSport as an integrated telco-tainment offering, as well as a perfect use case for high-speed connectivity and big data plans. We expect this to really take off when the power of 5G is unleashed.

"We've already seen big companies like Hungry Jacks, and JB Hi-Fi align themselves with eSports in various ways, and we expect that trend to continue. Some of our biggest sporting clubs have also acquired eSports teams, with the Adelaide Crows acquiring Sydney-based Legacy eSports in 2017.

"Broadcasters need to keep an eye on eSports, as every hour spent watching eSports is less time watching traditional TV and content. eSports will likely become a valuable media right as broadcasters diversify their approach to reach target audiences."

Alex Zaharov-Reutt

5G AND WI-FI 6 COMPLEMENTARY TECHNOLOGIES SAYS CISCO

2019 is a big year for wireless as it sees the start of the rollout of Wi-Fi 6 and 5G, on the 20th anniversary of Wi-Fi, Cisco APJC senior VP of engineering Anand Oswal says.

Wi-Fi 6 and 5G take advantage of similar fundamental technological building blocks, allowing high density, low latency and other improvements, Oswal said at the recent Cisco Live 2019 conference in Melbourne.

He expects Wi-Fi to continue to be the access mechanism of choice in homes, offices, stores and so on, with 5G being used largely outdoors.

Cisco senior vice president and chief of operations Irving Tan

Work is underway to make 5G and Wi-Fi work better together, with capabilities such as unified security, unified policies, and seamless transitions from one network to another.

Wi-Fi specific improvements include making it easier to connect to a new network.

This currently involves selecting an SSID, entering the password, navigating captive portals, and so on. "At Cisco, we believe we can do better."

Joining a Wi-Fi 6 network could become as easy as joining a cellular network. For example, Galaxy S9 users at MWC 2019 were connected to the Wi-Fi network completely automatically. "That is the experience you want," he said.

5G and Wi-fi 6 will provide "unprecedented low-latency and bandwidth possibilities", said Cisco senior vice-president and chief of operations Irving Tan (pictured above).

5G has particular significance for machine-to-machine communications, including medicine, agriculture, and vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure.

Indoor penetration is an issue for 5G signals, so it makes sense to use Wi-Fi 6 to distribute connectivity within buildings.

Also, systems that use regulated spectrum (eg, 5G) are expensive, so there's a good reason to use fixed-line connections to premises with Wi-Fi 6 for local reticulation, switching to 5G when off-premises.

But it's not quite that simple.

Cisco service provider sales vice president and CTO Colin Kincaid pointed out that while consumers don't care about ultra low latency, it does makes a difference in applications such as factory automation.

So it is likely that some industrial equipment will be connected by 5G.

The company also looks at 5G from the telcos' perspective.

Cisco APJ service provider business vice-president Sanjay Kaul pointed out that migrating to 5G isn't simply a matter of adding 5G radios. Instead, it is necessary to also address the core, transport and backhaul networks.

Cisco global service provider segment senior vice-president Michael Glickman added "We've always been radio agnostic" and are staying that way.

"This is a very interesting space", one that provides carriers with opportunities to become more profitable by meeting customers' needs.

One example of this is Verizon's 5G SD-WAN service for connecting branch offices.

Glickman also pointed out that "this part of the world [Korea, Japan and Australia] is at the cutting edge" of 5G.

"5G is full of promise," not just hype, said Kincaid. "What's possible is changing", but at this stage we don't know which new services will actually "stick."

Cisco senior vice-president and general manager of enterprise networking Scott Harrell said "5G is going to have a massive impact", but there is a need to determine how to bring 5G and Wi-Fi 6 together "in meaningful ways."

Cisco is determined to get the economics of 5G and Wi-Fi 6 right, said Tan.

Stephen Withers

OPTUS SWITCHES ON ANOTHER QLD MOBILE BLACK SPOT SITE

Optus has switched on a new tower in the South Burnett region in Queensland as part of round 2 of the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot program to bring dedicated coverage to the town of Maidenwell and surroundings for the first time.

The new site, co-funded by the Federal Government, is one of 17 Optus Mobile Black Spot sites now live across Queensland.

Optus says the tower, which is co-located on an NBN Co site on Kingaroy-Cooyar Road, will play a key role in providing enhanced coverage to over 200 local residents, with coverage stretching as far as 15 kilometres from the site.

Optus vice-president of Regulatory and Public Affairs, Andrew Sheridan, said, "This is a great moment for local residents as Optus delivers dedicated mobile coverage to the Maidenwell community for the first time, enabling residents to stay connected with their friends and family through reliable voice and data access.

"Enabling new sites like this across regional Queensland is made possible by our partnership with the Federal and State Governments.

"We are grateful for their investment in the Mobile Black Spot Program, as it creates opportunities for us to be responsive to communities where coverage is most needed."

Federal Member for Maranoa, David Littleproud, says, "Improved mobile coverage for Maidenwell hands locals more choices in how they live their lives and, ultimately, gives people a great opportunity to not only stay up to speed with education, business, news and contacting loved ones but also calling for help in an emergency.

"I'm proud to be delivering better mobile coverage to Maranoa because better connections result in more convenience, better economic opportunities and improve social opportunities for people living in isolated areas."

Optus says its network now handles more than 45 million calls and 80 million SMS messages each day and carries 6000 terabytes of data each week.

Peter Dinham