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Now 'kill' that unwanted SMS

By: [Shashank Shekhar](#) Date: 2011-03-07 Place: Delhi

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Delhi techies have developed a software that segregates spam messages on cellphones from regular ones

How many times does your cell phone beep in a day telling you that you have got a message and when you check it, realise that it is a spam? The telemarketers keep on sending these messages despite the fact that you have never subscribed to their services. The messages keep coming even after you have put your number on the national Do Not Disturb (DND) list that telecom authority has set up to keep such callers away from unwilling subscribers. You fume, fret and almost bang your phone.

Now you don't need to lose you calm over this unwanted intrusion into your phone. Researchers at Delhi based Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology have developed a software that segregates spam messages from the regular ones.



Tech help: A Facebook page where you can report about your spam messages. Dr Ponnurangam Kumaraguru and Kuldeep Yadav who are a part of the project. Pics/Mid Day

Called SMSAssassin, the software is the brainchild of a team of researchers including professor Dr Vinayak Nai, assistant professor Dr. Ponnurangam Kumaraguru and a student Kuldeep Yadav.

The software, which was developed for Nokia's Symbian operating system based phones, combines Bayesian filtering (a statistical technique of filtering spams in e-mail) with user submitted blacklists that uses 'crowd sourcing' to identify spam. The researchers are currently working on developing the software for Android based phones and those that run on Windows mobile.

SMS messages are very short, and often use regional terms or abbreviations. This makes it difficult to identify spam using traditional markers. According to Kumaraguru, the 'crowd sourcing' aspect enables the system to constantly update itself to new trends and changing tactics of spammers, and respond quickly to spam targeted to specific time periods, such as holidays.

According to the reports, despite a national DND registry, an estimated 100 million spam SMSes are sent to Indian mobile phone users every day.

This has given the researchers a plenty of source material to work with. With so many carriers, and no central place to parse these messages, the research team is banking on social media to help, build and train the system. "We are currently requesting the Facebook users to forward spam SMS messages to +91 8826068429."

"SMSAssassin performs the spam filtering automatically. It is designed to run on mid-range phones wherein it filters such spam messages and also gives user freedom to receive SMSes which are spams but still useful to him or her," Kumaraguru said.

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"This technology is in a prototype stage and we hope to build a full-fledged system that can be deployed in real time soon," said Kuldeep, the lead developer of SMSAssasin.

Postponed again

Trai has again postponed the date for implementation of the SMS Spam Regulations to March 21, 2011, the third postponement so far. Initially planned to commence from January 1, 2011, the implementation of regulations was delayed indefinitely on December 14, 2010 as, apparently, the TRAI website where telemarketers could get registered with the National Customer Preference Register was not ready.

The deadline was extended to February 1, 2011 after which it was extended to March 1 as the DoT mandated the use of the number series '140' instead of 70 for mobile telemarketers .

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