



# Public Service Announcement

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



**May 10, 2005**

## **NEW THREAT TO CELL PHONE USERS**

Until recently, phishing attempts, spam, and viruses have only been a problem for Internet users. However, spammers and hackers have recently realized that there are new opportunities with cell phones, given the use of digital technology.

The recent technology enhancements to cell phones have made them increasingly vulnerable. Many cell phone users now have the option to access the Internet from their phone. This presents a whole new area of concern and potential vulnerability for cell phone users.

The same risks exist when it comes to the Internet whether you are accessing it through a computer or a cell phone. As such cell phone users are just as vulnerable to phishing attempts, spam, and associated viruses as people who use a computer.

- From January to March 2005, there have been over 1,000 vulnerabilities found with cell phones, which is a 6% increase from last year.[[1](#)]
- The use of adware, which is short for advertising software, makes spreading spam and viruses incredibly easy. Between 2004 and 2005, McAfee reported a 20% increase in threats using malware. Malware is malicious software such as viruses or Trojan horses.[[2](#)]
- In 2003, cell phone users were sent less than 10 million unsolicited emails. That number is expected to rise to 500 million this year.[[3](#)]

Cell phone users accessing the Internet should protect themselves with anti-virus protection, install the latest patches, and employ spam filters just like when using a computer.

Contact your cellular phone provider for more information on how to protect yourself from phishing attempts, spam, and viruses.

This document is issued in keeping with IC3's goal to keep the public informed about new trends observed in recent complaints received.

1. <http://www.computerworld.com>
2. <http://www.financialexpress.com>
3. <http://www.detnews.com>