

Taiwan Signs International Agreement on Spam

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On April 27, Taiwan's government signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation regarding combating spam that was also signed by communications and Internet agencies in 10 other Asian-Pacific nations.

The agreement, which is being referred to as the 2005 Seoul-Melbourne MOU, is a successor to the ground-breaking 2003 MOU between Korea and Australia, which led the way for other international spam agreements, including a 2004 MOU between Australia, the US and UK. This latest agreement is almost identical to the 2003 Korea-Australia agreement, with the main difference being the additional signatories. Under the agreement, the signatories will exchange information concerning policies, strategies, technical and educational solutions to the spam problem and enforcement of regulations. All activities pursuant to the MOU are subject to domestic and international laws and availability of funds and resources. The agreement will remain in effect for a period of five years unless terminated earlier.

This is not the first time Taiwan has entered into an international agreement on spam; in January 2004 Taiwan's Directorate General of Telecommunications (DGT) was one of 36 agencies from 26 countries that signed the US Federal Trade Commission's "Operation Secure Your Server," a global campaign to identify open relays and open proxies and take actions to close them. However, unlike the above agreement, the 2005 Seoul-Melbourne MOU was not signed by the DGT but by the Taiwan Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), one of a worldwide network of CERTs that focus on combating worms, viruses, denial of service attacks, phishing scams and other Internet security issues. Ultimately, it is expected that regulation of spam in Taiwan will come within the purview of the National Communications Commission (NCC), an entity presently being formed to serve as a common regulator of the various broadcasting and information media, in accordance with global trends and obligations.

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Meanwhile, Taiwan has yet to enact domestic legislation governing spam. In January 2005, the Executive Yuan approved a draft spam bill proposed by the preparatory office of the NCC. The draft bill was delivered to the Legislative Yuan in March and must pass three readings by the Legislative Yuan and be signed by the President before it becomes law.

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