

# Anti-Phishing Working Group

## Phishing Attack Trends Report

February, 2004

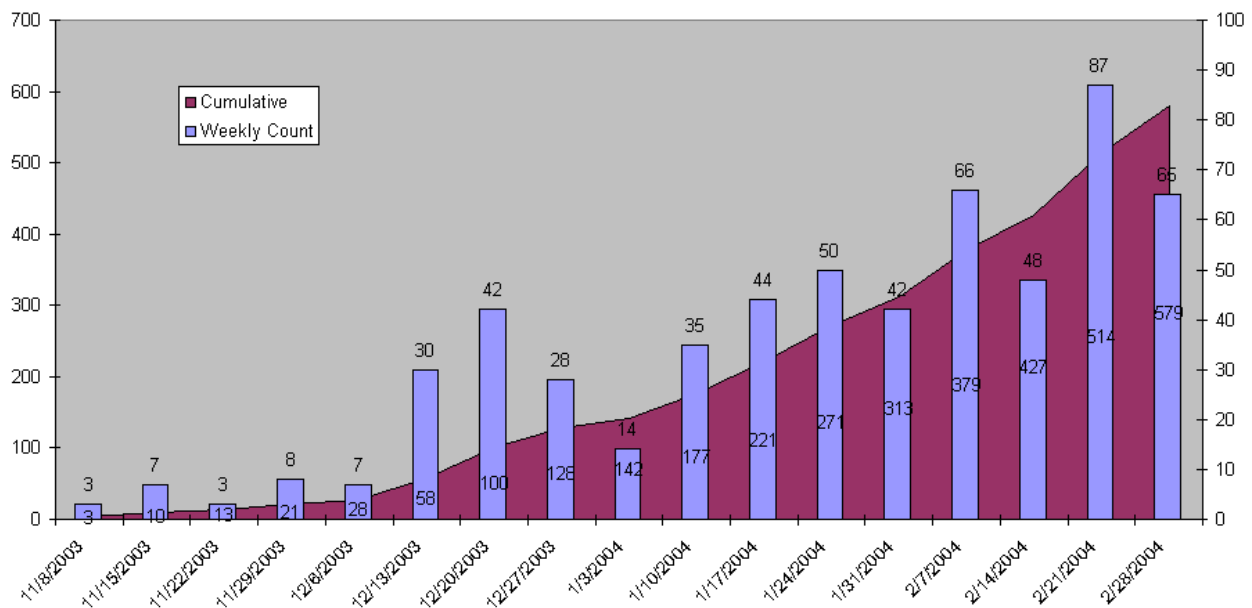
Phishing attacks involve the mass distribution of 'spoofed' e-mail messages with return addresses, links, and branding which appear to come from banks, insurance agencies, retailers or credit card companies. These fraudulent messages are designed to fool the recipients into divulging personal authentication data such as account usernames and passwords, credit card numbers, social security numbers, ATM card PINs, etc. Because these emails look "official" and recipients trust the brand, they often respond to them, resulting in financial losses, identity theft, and other fraudulent activity.

The Phishing Attack Trends Report analyzes phishing attacks reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group via the organization's website, <http://www.antiphishing.org> or email submission via [reportphishing@antiphishing.org](mailto:reportphishing@antiphishing.org). The Anti-Phishing Working Group phishing attack repository is the Internet's most comprehensive archive of email fraud and phishing attacks.

### Highlights

- Number of unique phishing attacks reported in February: **282**
- Average number of unique phishing attacks per day reported in February: **9.7**
- Organization most targeted by phishing attacks in February: **eBay**
- Business sector most targeted by phishing attacks in February: **Financial Services**

Unique Phishing Attack Trend  
Nov 2003 - Feb 2004



The **Phishing Attack Trends Report** is published monthly by the Anti-Phishing Working Group, an industry association focused on eliminating the identity theft and fraud that result from the growing problem of phishing and email spoofing. For further information, please contact Dan Maier at [dmaier@antiphishing.org](mailto:dmaier@antiphishing.org) or +1 650-216-2078.

Analysis for the **Phishing Attack Trends Report** has been donated by the Tumbleweed Communications Message Protection Lab. The mission of the Tumbleweed Message Protection Lab is to analyze enterprise email threats (e.g. spam, email fraud, viruses, etc) and design new email protection technologies.



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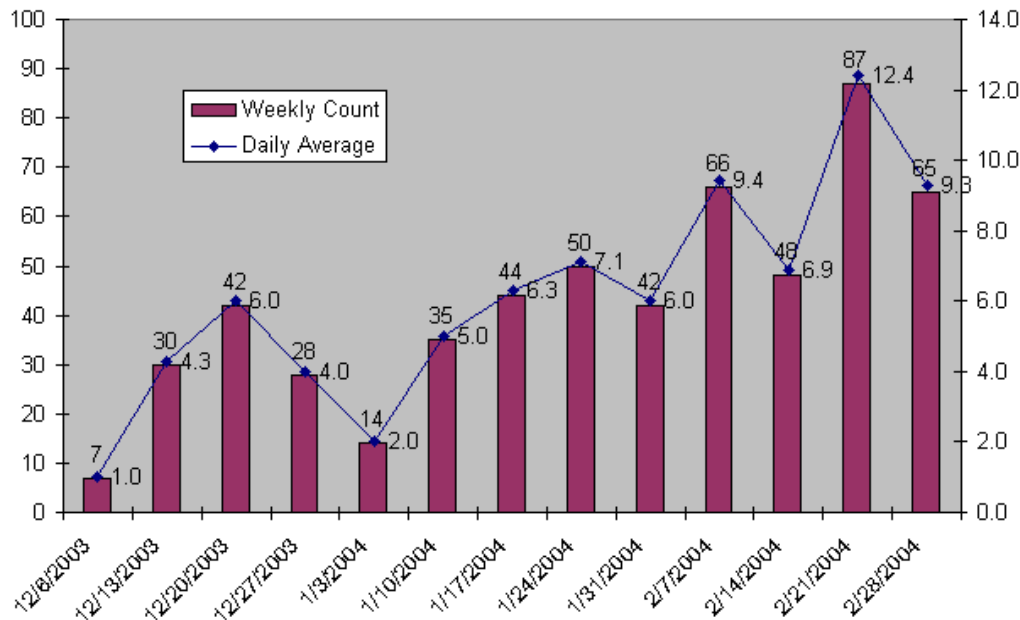
<http://www.antiphishing.org> • [info@antiphishing.org](mailto:info@antiphishing.org)

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## Email Phishing Attack Trends

In February, there were 282 new, unique phishing attacks reported to the Anti-Phishing Working Group. This was a 60% increase over the number of attacks reported in January (176). The average number of phishing attacks per day grew significantly in February to 9.7. Analyzing this information on a weekly basis shows an increasing trend, with a peak of 12.4 attacks per day in the third week of February.

Weekly Unique Phishing Attacks  
Dec 2003 - Feb 2004



## Who Is Being Targeted?

### Most-Targeted Companies

The most targeted companies in February were largely similar to those targeted in previous months. eBay once again was the most targeted company, with 104 unique attacks that hijacked eBay's brand. This represents over 100% growth in attacks from the number seen in December (51). Citibank was once again the second most attacked company in February with 58 unique attacks hijacking its brand, a 66% growth in attacks. And displacing AOL as the third most-phished company was Paypal with 42 attacks (320% growth). Other notable attack increases seen February were seen by Fleet Bank, Visa, and Barclays. And interestingly, there were NO reported phishing attacks against American Express in February.

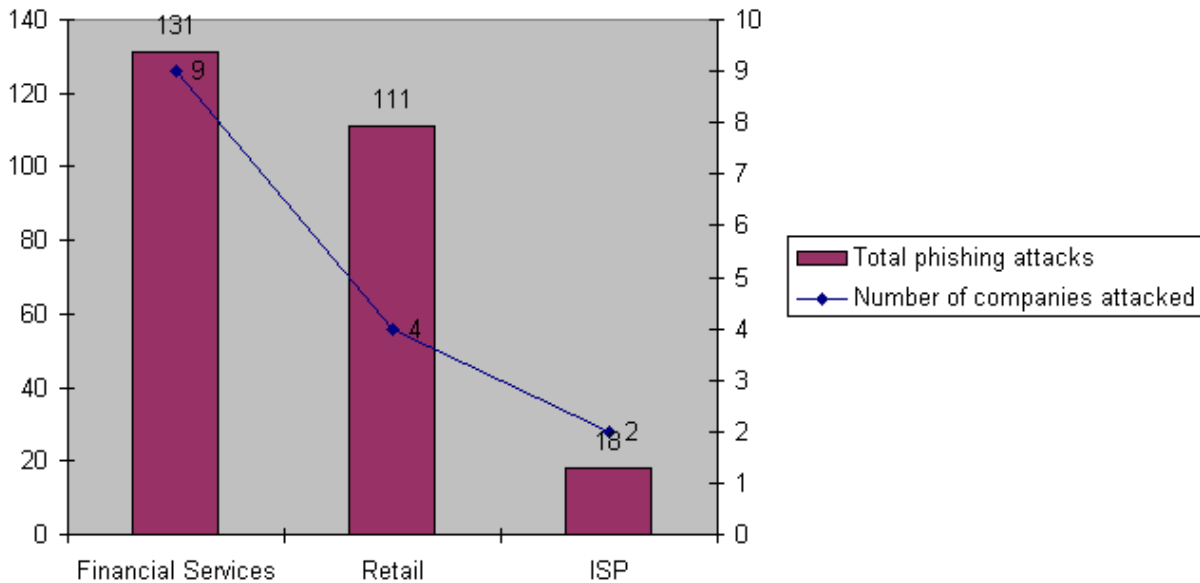
Unique Phishing Attacks by Targeted Company				
PhishTarget	Feb 2004	Jan 2004	Dec 2003	Nov 2003
eBay	104	51	33	6
Citibank	58	35	17	6
Paypal	42	10	6	4
AOL	10	34	16	4
Fleet Bank	9	2	2	1
Earthlink	8	9	4	2
Visa	8	2	2	1
Barclays	6	1	1	0
Yahoo	4	2	1	0
Bank One	3	0	0	0
Amazon.com	2	1	1	0
E-Gold	2	1	1	0
FDIC	2	1	1	0
Microsoft	1	3	3	1
SwiftPay	1	1	1	0
American Express	0	6	4	1

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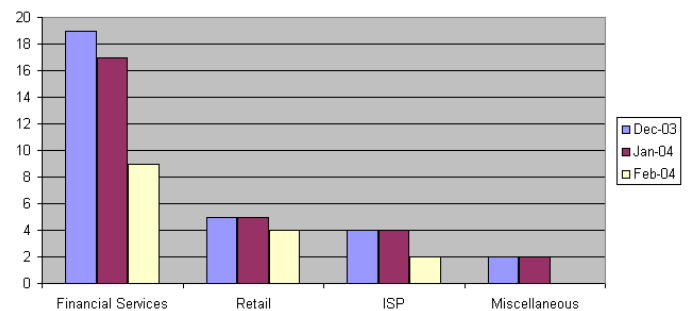
## Most-Targeted Industry Sectors

The most targeted industry sector for phishing attacks continues to be Financial Services, from the perspective of total attacks as well as number of companies targeted. The Retail sector (primarily online retailers) continues to follow closely after, although there are fewer retailers targeted. The Financial Services sector averaged 14.6 phishing attacks reported per company in February, while the Retail sector averaged 27.8 reported attacks (driven largely by one targeted company – eBay).

### Phishing Attacks by Industry Sector - Feb 2004



### Number of Companies Targeted per Industry Segment Dec 2003 - Feb 2004



Over the past three months, it appears that phishers are starting to focus on attacking a smaller set of target companies with a larger volume of phishing attacks. The chart at right shows the number of companies targeted in each industry sector over time, and each sector shows a trend that fewer companies are being targeted each month.

# Anti-Phishing Working Group

## **About the Anti-Phishing Working Group**

The Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG) is an industry association focused on eliminating the identity theft and fraud that result from the growing problem of phishing and email spoofing. The organization provides a forum to discuss phishing issues, define the scope of the phishing problem in terms of hard and soft costs, and share information and best practices for eliminating the problem. Where appropriate, the APWG will also look to share this information with law enforcement.

Membership is open to qualified financial institutions, online retailers, ISPs, the law enforcement community, and solutions providers. Note that because phishing attacks and email fraud are sensitive subjects for many organizations that do business online, the APWG has a policy of maintaining the confidentiality of member organizations.

The Web site of the Anti-Phishing Working Group is <http://www.antiphishing.org>. It serves as a public and industry resource for information about the problem of phishing and email fraud, including identification and promotion of pragmatic technical solutions that can provide immediate protection and benefits against phishing attacks. The analysis, forensics, and archival of phishing attacks to the Web site are currently powered by Tumbleweed Communications' Message Protection Lab.

The APWG was founded by Tumbleweed Communications and a number of member banks, financial services institutions, and e-commerce providers. It held its first meeting in November 2003 in San Francisco.