

EME MRA signed with Taiwan

A recently signed mutual recognition arrangement on electromagnetic energy health exposure (EME MRA) with Taiwan allows for the mutual acceptance of test reports from recognised assessment bodies for radiocommunications products such as cellular and cordless phones.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office and the Australian Commerce and Industry Office are the signatories to the EME MRA, with ACMA and the National Communications Commission of Taiwan the 'implementing authorities'.

Under the EME MRA, products manufactured or tested in Australia with a test report issued by an ACMA-designated conformity assessment body will no longer require re-testing before entering the Taiwan market. Duplication of testing and certification will be eliminated, saving time and money for manufacturers and importers.

ACMA already accepts test reports from test laboratories accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) and NATA-MRA partners, which means there are no changes

required to the regulatory arrangements for importers into Australia. The bilateral MRA will provide significant benefits for exporters from Australia trying to enter the Taiwan market.

The MRA is based on mutual recognition of accredited testing facilities as capable of testing and meeting each other's EME standard for portable radiocommunications devices such as cellular and cordless phones. It is based on a mutual confidence in test houses that follow the MRA guidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Telecommunications and Information Working Group (APEC TEL) and the capabilities of these test houses to meet the MRA partner's regulatory requirements.

The Asia-Pacific is a region in which international commodity trade and linkages are growing rapidly. In 2004, an MRA for electromagnetic compatibility was signed with Taiwan that has provided faster access to markets for suppliers of electrical and electronic goods.

Information about ACMA's EME regulatory arrangements is on the website at www.acma.gov.au.

SpamMATTERS™ helps international fight against spam

You've inherited \$2,500,000.35 from a long-lost relative in Nigeria! Can you afford to miss the latest pharmacy bargains direct from Uzbekistan? If these messages sound familiar, it is probably because you have received spam emails at some time. This form of promoting 'scams' or simply advertising products using email messages has continued to grow exponentially around the world. Spam is a global problem that requires coordinated global solutions. The fact that more than 99 per cent of the spam emails received in Australia originate overseas has made the task of identifying and combating the sources of spam even more difficult.

Fighting the spam scourge

SpamMATTERS™ is a spam reporting tool available for free on the ACMA website that can be installed into Microsoft Outlook and Outlook Express. From its release in May 2005 to the end of September 2007, SpamMATTERS™ had received more than 31 million spam email reports and more than 236,000 Australians had registered to use it. ACMA uses the data collected to

report information to overseas authorities about spam related to their jurisdiction. Spam reported using SpamMATTERS™ retains the email 'header' data, which provides information about the electronic identity of the sender. The data is sorted into spam 'campaigns' based on like characteristics.

ACMA works closely with regulators around the world, as well as internet service providers (ISPs), anti-spam organisations and anti-virus software vendors. Organisations can share global intelligence on spammers internationally, identify and close down compromised computers that spread malware (malicious software) or spam, and develop further strategies to more effectively fight spam.

SpamMATTERS™ is an integral part of this cooperative effort. It enables ACMA to collect spam reports for forensic analysis, which are then used to assist overseas regulators with their spam investigations. Reports derived from SpamMATTERS™ data are regularly sent to overseas regulatory authorities, identifying the 'destination' IP address in the links in

the spam message—usually not readily identifiable in the spam message. It is not uncommon for spam messages sent from thousands of different addresses to be directed back to a single IP address.

ACMA is also at the forefront of establishing anti-spam arrangements with other countries through formal agreements (see next page).

Battling the zombies

An increasing problem in combating spam is the use by spammers of 'zombie' computers—controlled remotely without the owner's knowledge—as the source of the message. Recent estimates are that 80–90 per cent of spam is sent through zombie computers.

As a part of the Australian Internet Security Initiative (AISI), ACMA plans to enhance the SpamMATTERS™ software to identify compromised machines that deliver spam about which complaints are received. Under the AISI, participating ISPs receive daily reports of compromised computers on their networks, enabling the ISP to contact the computer's owner to help 'disinfect' their machines. The

enhancement will mean more compromised computers are identified, reducing the number of Australian zombies in operation.

ACMA has been able to use the data from SpamMATTERS™ to identify trends, current scams or 'phishing' campaigns, and support ACMA's anti-spam investigations. The data is also used to assist legitimate online advertisers to comply with the *Spam Act 2003*. A person complaining to ACMA may have forgotten that they consented to receive messages from a particular company. In such cases, ACMA may not find a breach of the Spam Act, but the company concerned may review its electronic marketing operations while demonstrating and ensuring compliance with the Spam Act.

The anti-spam pages of the ACMA website have been updated to include information about current spam scams identified from SpamMATTERS™ data. Complaints about spam can be made and the SpamMATTERS™ reporting button downloaded from the ACMA website at www.spam.acma.gov.au.