

Computer virus telemarketers under scrutiny

The ACMA is ramping up its fight against computer virus telemarketers who try to convince a consumer that their computer has a virus they can remove for a fee.

In the first three months of 2011, nearly half of all complaints about telemarketing calls made to numbers on the Do Not Call Register have involved this type of scam. While some businesses offer a legitimate virus prevention or removal service, many are falsely claiming to be related to reputable companies, such as Microsoft.

To stop consumers from receiving such calls, the ACMA has begun a targeted compliance campaign aimed at businesses that offer online virus removal and technical support.

The compliance initiative includes formal investigations into four separate computer virus companies. In addition, the ACMA is:

- > working closely with voice over internet protocol providers to identify rogue telemarketers
- > cooperating with international regulators on developing strategies to tackle this global problem
- > liaising with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) as some of these businesses may be contravening consumer law.

'Australian consumers have had enough, so we're telling these telemarketers: "Do Not Call",' said ACMA Chairman Chris Chapman.

'Telemarketers that are investigated by the ACMA run the risk of incurring penalties of up to \$110,000 per day.'

More information about this telemarketing scam is available at www.acma.gov.au/pccvirustelemarketingscam.

The Do Not Call Register is a free federal government initiative where Australians can register their numbers to opt out of receiving telemarketing calls and marketing faxes. To register, call 1300 792 958 or visit www.donotcall.gov.au.

You can report a scam to the ACCC's SCAMwatch at www.scamwatch.gov.au or by calling 1300 795 995.

Independent auditor to oversee Nine's captioning services

The Nine Network is to implement an independent audit system to ensure it meets future captioning requirements, following a series of breaches.

Stations TCN and NBN breached their captioning obligations under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* during several broadcasts between June and July 2010. These most recent breaches follow a number of other instances since 2005.

From 14 March 2011, the captioning process and delivery at TCN and NBN will be independently audited every six months over a period of two years.

'Given Nine's patchy track record in providing this essential service, the ACMA considers that the introduction of outside auditors reflects an appropriate measure of independence and oversight,' said ACMA Chairman Chris Chapman.

'We welcome Nine's initiative in resolving this matter; however, the ACMA will naturally continue to closely monitor any complaints received about caption delivery in the broadcasting sector.'

The ACMA is also working with industry, consumers and government to develop indicators that assess caption quality, which is a primary consumer concern. A captioning working committee is aiming to develop meaningful, measureable and deliverable quality indicators that are acceptable to all stakeholders.

The committee has met regularly following the ACMA captioning forum in September 2010, with the most recent meeting held on 27 April 2011.