

Netsafe tackles \$257m cyber crime problem, with AI weapon against scammers

Auckland, New Zealand - 08 November 2017 | [Netsafe](#), New Zealand's independent online safety organisation, is today announcing an innovative approach to fighting back against scammers; Re:scam.

The new artificially intelligent (AI) email assistant comes at a critical time with cybercrime having cost New Zealand almost \$257m in the past year, according to industry body [APWG](#).

Given that 70 per cent of the New Zealand businesses that have experienced a cyberattack have fallen victim to an email scam, Re:scam has been designed specifically with phishing in mind. Re:scam works by occupying the time and resources of scammers through deploying a well-educated AI email assistant. Instead of junking or deleting a scam email, you can now forward it to Re:scam who will continue the conversation until the scammer stops replying.

Re:scam's powerful AI is capable of assuming multiple personas, engaging scammers in an ongoing exchange that wastes the time they otherwise could have spent targeting potential victims. It can imitate real human tendencies by using humour and making grammatical errors, all while collecting data that will help to bring down criminals by exposing their vulnerabilities.

Over a year in development, the CEO of Netsafe, Martin Cocker, is excited to be launching another tool in the arsenal to take the fight to scammers.

He says, "We are really concerned about the growth of predatory email phishing, while victims remain essentially powerless. We feel the scale of the problem far outweighs the attention it receives, and we want to empower people to take action. Re:scam provides them with the opportunity to do so."

Prior to public launch, Netsafe's Re:scam had already been successfully deployed to fight scammers during beta testing and is currently having thousands of conversations with real scammers saving Kiwis valuable time and money.

With the main impact of cybercrime in New Zealand being time wasted, Re:scam is designed to be quick and easy for everyone to use – no matter who they are. Internet users who receive a phishing email can share the problem with Re:scam instantly by simply forwarding the spam email to me@rescam.org, who can look back and review the exchange between the bot and scammer.

“Everyone is susceptible to online phishing schemes and no matter how tech savvy you are, scammers are becoming increasingly sophisticated,” says Martin. “Re:scam will adapt as the scammers adapt their techniques, collecting data that will help us to keep up and protect more and more people across New Zealand.”

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Reporting email phishing scams

If New Zealanders have lost money in an email scam, or given out information of any type they should contact Netsafe for advice immediately. If they have given out banking details, they should also notify their bank immediately. If someone is unsure if an email they have is a scam they can contact Netsafe for free advice seven days a week by calling 0508 NETSAFE or emailing help@netsafe.org.nz

About Netsafe:

Netsafe is New Zealand’s independent, non-profit online safety organisation. Founded in 1998, Netsafe has been helping to keep New Zealanders safe online for almost 20 years with a technology-positive approach to the challenges that digital technology presents. Each year, Netsafe provides support, education and advice to thousands of New Zealand internet users on a diverse range of issues from scams to online abuse and harassment. With some of the strongest relationships in the business, Netsafe collaborates with government, law enforcement, industry and community organisations in locally and globally to achieve the best outcomes for New Zealanders.

For more information, contact:

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