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Headline: AI, deepfakes propel Thailand's rising scam epidemic

CYBERSECURITY

AI, deepfakes propel Thailand's rising scam epidemic

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Scammers are evolving from random cold calls to leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and personal data leaks from the underground market to analyse targeted users.

Thailand continues to record the highest volume of scam attempts among all Asian markets, according to Whoscall.

The Royal Thai Police said that deepfakes and social media are becoming the primary methods used to lure victims.

"Scammers are increasing their activities and using seasonal event stories to lure victims," Pol Maj Gen Siriwat Deepor, deputy spokesman of the Royal Thai Police, told a media conference yesterday.

Similar to oil price scams, which lure users to click on malicious SMS links, fraudsters now exploit current issues and holidays to attract victims, he added.

"Scams have evolved from random attacks to highly targeted strikes, using leaked personal data [often sold by corrupt employees] to increase credibility," said Pol Maj Gen Siriwat.

Scammers also use AI, particularly deepfakes, to create fraudulent personas and fake accounts.

They target victims through three primary channels: phone calls (call centres), SMS, and social media. Facebook is a major channel, with 600-700 complaints per day, he said.

In Thailand last year, financial damages from fraud averaged 69 million baht per day, totalling 25.1 billion baht annually, with over 1,045 cases reported daily.

The top five fraud categories included product and service scams, employment scams (luring victims into money transfers for jobs), lending fraud, and 'reward' scams that trick users into transferring money to receive a prize.

Women account for 64% of the victims. Surprisingly, the most targeted age group is working-age adults, rather than the elderly, due to their higher engagement with online investments and financial apps.

Before the rise of AI, scams primarily relied on fake SMS messages to lure victims.

Pol Maj Gen Siriwat said that Thailand is aware of scammers' illegal use of the Starlink satellite internet constellation to connect with victims, and the relevant authorities are addressing the issue.

In Thailand, the police managed to help reclaim 500 million baht for victims last year.

According to the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, it has implemented 12 measures to tackle scammers. Last year, its collaboration with telecom operators successfully blocked 190,440 scammer numbers.

Whoscall Thailand, a major caller ID and spam-blocking app developed by Gogolook, a leading TrustTech company, has released its 2025 Annual Report, revealing a sophisticated and professionalised scam landscape that continues to make Thailand the primary target of telecommunications crime in Asia.

While global scam volumes showed a marginal decline, the 2025 data indicates that Thailand has diverged from regional recovery trends.

Thailand saw a rise in both the volume and precision of targeted attacks, despite increased regional enforcement and cross-border cooperation, says the company.

In 2025, Thais were targeted by 39 million scam calls and 134 million scam SMS messages, with December marking the peak of activity. Data shows that 27% of all unknown calls and 52% of all unknown SMS messages received by Thais are now confirmed as spam or scams.

Whoscall revealed its findings, identifying over 6 billion calls and SMS messages globally in 2025.

Of this volume, 480 million were verified as scam attempts, representing 8% of all global telecom traffic.

While the global total fell from 540 million in 2024, Thailand continues to experience the highest volume of scam attempts among all Asian markets in the Whoscall network, highlighting the urgent need for increased digital vigilance.

Scam activity in Thailand reached a staggering 173 million identified attempts in 2025, marking a 3.16% year-over-year increase.

Whoscall's 2025 data showed that in Thailand, phone numbers are no longer leaked in isolation; in 94% of cases, leaked numbers were linked to real names.

Furthermore, 25% of these records included email addresses, 12% contained passwords, 8% revealed dates of birth, and 9% exposed physical addresses.