

Ur Cute Msg me on MSN

The sexual solicitation is a tactic spammers have been trying for many years via email, said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant with U.K.-based security firm Sophos. Cluley keeps a close eye on the latest lures cast out by spammers and recently has seen an upswing in Twitter "tweets" that feature scantily-clad women and include a message embedded into the image, rather than in the 140-character tweet itself. A typical example includes a message that says "Ur cute. Msg me on MSN," which is embedded into the picture and is a ploy that ultimately leads the user to an adult site, said Cluley. Embedding the message into the picture is a way for spammers to get past Twitter's anti-spam filters, he said.

"You can see they (spammers) are going to further and further lengths to drive you to their Web site," said Cluley.

The ruse gets even more sophisticated if you decide to "chat" with one of these "ladies" on MSN, said Cluley. Instead of a person, it's a bot pretending to be a human conducting the flirtatious conversation.

"They are trying to reduce their costs and it's much easier to have computer programs do this for you," said Cluley.

Cluley said the bot follows a script which offers the end user a "free pass" to their supposed adult webcam site. However, the site being linked to in the pass typically asks for credit card and other user information for age verification. Of course, handing over this kind of information makes you a prime target for identity theft, said Cluley.