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## BARRACUDA STUDY:

### **Fake Twitter users on the rise; Cost becomes more affordable**

*eBay 'Twitter account sellers' now selling 1,000 fake Twitter followers for average of USD11*

**KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, 12 December 2013** – [Barracuda Networks, Inc.](http://www.barracudanetworks.com) (NYSE: CUDA), a leading provider of cloud-connected security and storage solutions, today published its latest report on fake Twitter users as part of its continuous efforts to understand the impact of fake accounts on social networks.

"The Barracuda research report highlighted three major trends:- 98 per cent of tweets from Fake Twitter accounts were sent via twitter.com, as compared to just 24 percent of Real account users using twitter.com who preferred using a third party or mobile application," shared Thiban Darmalingam, the Regional Manager for Barracuda in Malaysia.

Twitter currently has over 230 million active monthly users (both real and fake) that send over 500 million tweets per day.

"Every few months, our team of researchers at our Barracuda Labs, presents a summary of the latest findings that contribute to the spread of spam and malware and pose a threat to the average Internet user. It is discovered that fake accounts are not only being used for malware distribution but they are also monetized by selling them as followers."

He says that there are currently 52 sellers on eBay selling Twitter followers who are making fake twitter accounts more affordable too.

"A year ago, 1,000 fake followers could have set you back USD25 but now the average price is USD11. At an estimate, these dealers have several thousand buyers who spend an average of USD65. In fact our researchers found one dealer who may have generated USD1.4 million just by selling fake Twitter followers," adds Thiban.

63 percent of fake accounts are created by duplicating the information of real users by appending their screen name with a few characters while still using the same profile photo, location and description.

"Spamming using Twitter lists is another trend we have discovered. Twitter accounts barely a few hours old, can add over 90,000 people to various lists. As of now there is no way to block such activities other than by manually blocking these suspicious users. While this may work in the short term, it will be a tedious process for users that have been added to



hundreds of lists,” explains Thiban.

“In summary, it seems people still have a large appetite for large number of fake followers to seem more popular. Fraudsters are cashing in on this and are even lowering prices to compete with each other.”

“Attackers are continuing to innovate the way they abuse popular social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to spam or earn money and these trends are spreading to newly emerging social networks such as Tinder and more. As more users increase in any ecosystem, along with it comes’ the spammers and fraudsters,” ends Thiban.

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Barracuda infographic on twitter abuse

[http://barracudalabs.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/BarracudaLabs\\_TwitterAbuse.jpg](http://barracudalabs.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/BarracudaLabs_TwitterAbuse.jpg)

#### **About Barracuda Networks, Inc. (NYSE: CUDA)**

Barracuda provides cloud-connected security and storage solutions that simplify IT. These powerful, easy-to-use and affordable solutions are trusted by more than 150,000 organizations worldwide and are delivered in appliance, virtual appliance, cloud and hybrid deployments. Barracuda’s customer-centric business model focuses on delivering high-value, subscription-based IT solutions that provide end-to-end network and data security. For additional information, please visit <http://www.barracuda.com> or follow us on Twitter: [@barracuda](https://twitter.com/barracuda)

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