A MONTHLY analysis of identity fraud attacks - known as phishing - by a US-based group has been called into question by one of Australia's biggest banks. Westpac, which consistently rates in the top 10 of the Anti-Phishing Working Group's list of most targeted companies, has questioned the credentials of the organisation and the methods used to produce the report.

Phishing attacks use spoofed emails and fraudulent websites to fool customers of mainly financial institutions into divulging personal financial information.

"I understand they are a software vendor and they are just trying to sell software to the industry," a Westpac spokeswoman said.

She also questioned the APWG's definition of a unique phishing attack as a "single blast sent out at one time, targeting one company or organisation, and having one unique subject line".

Bendigo Bank also appeared in the June report. While the spokeswoman and IT manager for the bank had not heard of the organisation before, she said the number of attacks listed in the report - five - was about right for the month of June.

The Westpac spokeswoman declined to say whether the APWG's estimate of 11 attacks against the bank for June was right or wrong.

The monthly report is compiled by email security and anti-spam company Tumbleweed Communications and the APWG.

According to information in the report, the APWG is an "industry association focused on eliminating the identity theft and fraud that result from the growing problem of phishing and email spoofing".

Membership to the group, which now totals 250, is "open to qualified financial institutions, online retailers, ISPs, the law enforcement community and solutions providers".

The June trends report - which analyses phishing attacks reported to the APWG - found phishing attacks for June had grown 19 per cent over May figures.

The number of unique phishing attacks reported in June was 1422, with 27 per cent - the largest number - occurring in the US.

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