ANZ Bank has become the latest high-profile financial institution to be hit by a phishing scam, with emails originating from a US internet address used in an attempt to fool Australians into handing over their internet banking passwords.

The emails - received late yesterday in Australia - are headed "security alert", and ask customers to enter their details on a web form embedded in the email.

"As the technical service of bank have been currently upgrading the software we ask you to follow given below to confirm your data, otherwise your access may be bloked (sic)," the email reads.

An ANZ spokeswoman said the bank had informed the Australian Federal Police and computer security group AusCERT of the latest scam email, and hoped to have the site shut down.

"The first step is to inform people and to update the warnings on our web site, and to make sure call centre staff are prepared," she said. "We also work with AusCERT and the Federal Police and liaise with them to get the site shut down."

According to the Anti-Phishing Working Group, the US was the most popular country for the hosting of phishing web sites. The sites latest an average of 5.8 days online before being removed.

More than 2500 phishing sites were detected in April, the most recent month for which statistics were available, up 15 per cent over the past nine months.