

Tier-1 Operators Find Success in Mitigating Robocalls, But the Fight Must Now Extend to Smaller Providers

Through new Federal regulations, the telecom industry sought to curb robocalls. The first step was to target Tier-1 operators.

The FCC Has Been Active in 2021

Following a brief dip during the Covid-19 lockdown, unwanted calls increased by 6% in the first half of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020. As of September, Americans received an overwhelming 80 billion unwanted robocalls over the prior 12 months.

Stemming from 2019's TRACED Act, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) enforced a June 30, 2021 deadline for voice service providers with more than 100,000 subscribers to implement STIR/SHAKEN.

The FCC also called on all operators to log their robocall prevention efforts in the newly created Robocall Mitigation Database.

80
Billion



STIR/SHAKEN Yields Positive Results for Tier-1s



STIR/SHAKEN had a direct effect on Tier-1 operators. 55% of total calls made in July by top-tier carriers that had implemented STIR/SHAKEN solutions via TNS were verified, up from 35% at the beginning of the year.

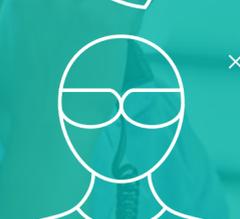


Furthermore, TNS data shows that only 5% of all high-risk calls originate on the networks of the top six US carriers (AT&T, CenturyLink, Comcast, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon).

Bad Actors Have Shifted their Attack Methods



Where have the bad actors behind robocalls migrated given that traffic no longer originates on Tier-1 networks? Data overwhelmingly suggests Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) networks.



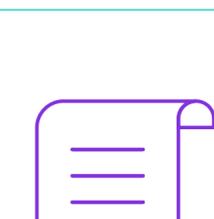
66% percent of all high-risk calls and 61% of all nuisance calls originate from VoIP telephone numbers (those utilized by MSOs and VoIP providers).

VoIP networks make it relatively easy to spoof caller ID; the percentage of unwanted calls on VoIP networks increased to 38% in the first half of 2021, rising from 17% in 2020.

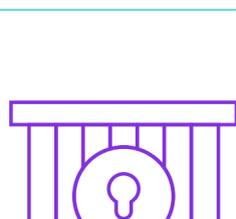
FCC's Penalties Signal There's No Tolerance for Noncompliance



The FCC issued a record \$5.1 million fine for election-related robocalls and levied a \$225 million fine for non-election related robocalls, the largest penalty ever imposed in FCC history.



The FCC adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) requiring domestic gateway providers (made up of mostly VoIP providers) that accept international calls to implement STIR/SHAKEN.



These actions make one thing clear: operators that fail to get in line with the FCC's robocall mandates will face the consequences.

Robocall Fallout and the Way Forward



Consumers' trust in voice calls has completely eroded due to the onslaught of unwanted robocalls. These days consumers don't answer 11% of calls from numbers they don't recognize.



One solution that could re-establish consumer trust in voice calls is Enterprise Branded Calling. This technology enables businesses to position their logo and name on the screen of an incoming call to drive increased consumer engagement.

If you are interested in learning more about robocall activity from 2021, request copies of TNS' *Robocall Investigation Reports* from **March** and **September**. More information on Enterprise Branded Calling can be found on TNS' website.

