

2021 was a Positive Step in the Fight Against Robocalls but Challenges Still Remain in 2022

In 2021 the FCC helped Tier-1 operators make substantial progress in blocking robocall traffic. 2022 requires expanding these efforts beyond Tier-1 carriers.

2021 and Tier-1 Operator Progress

Following 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.

STIR/SHAKEN increased call verifications and mitigated robocall activity on Tier-1 networks. Following the June deadline, TNS data showed more than 55% of total calls made in July 2021 on Tier-1 networks that had deployed STIR/SHAKEN were verified, up from 35% at the beginning of the year.

Furthermore, the top seven carriers (AT&T, Lumen, Charter, Comcast, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular and Verizon) accounted for less than 5% of high-risk robocalls in 2021.

Still, there's a long way to go in terms of equipping carriers with the call authentication tools they need: the US PIRG Education Fund found among 3,063 providers that reported their status to the FCC as of Sept. 3, only 17% said they'd completely implemented call authentication technology while 27% indicated partial implementation.

Robotexts Are Coming

The FCC received a 146% increase in robotext complaints in 2021 compared to 2020.

Consumers are very familiar with popular 6 digit long codes when it comes to receiving alerts and confirmations for appointments, reservations and purchases, but it is the emergence of 10 digit long code (10DLC) robotexts that have led to the dramatic increase in complaints.

10DLC robotexts make it difficult to determine whether these texts are generated by humans or applications, making it much harder to decipher bad actors from legitimate organizations.

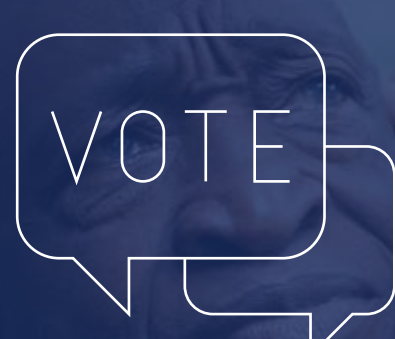


Midterm Elections Will Spotlight Robocall Challenge

Another thorn in the side of those trying to combat robocalls is the upcoming midterm elections.

On Election Day 2020, Americans received 8.25 million robocalls. From July to October of that year, political robocalls accounted for approximately one-tenth of the total unwanted call volume, helping to explain why 54% of Americans believed robocalls and robotexts were used to undermine confidence in the 2020 US election.

Political robocalls and robotexts aren't just about scamming voters out of money; it will increasingly be about confusing and influencing through massive voter disinformation.



Demand for Branded Calling Will Spike

2022 will see the entire telecom industry improve at blocking unwanted robocalls. That's only half the battle though. The industry must make progress giving consumers the confidence to answer legitimate, wanted calls, and that can't happen without restoring trust in voice calling.

The unidentified call answer rate by consumers for unknown phone numbers is 11%. This number is extremely detrimental for organizations such as doctors' offices, pharmacies, schools, small businesses and other companies that need to reach people in a timely fashion.

Branded calling - where organizations can provide their name, logo and the reason for a call - is positioned to restore consumer trust in answering unidentified calls. More than half (52%) of consumers indicated in a recent survey commissioned by TNS that seeing brand information on their phone (logo, name, reason for call) affects their willingness to answer calls.



If you are interested in learning more about robocall activity from 2021, visit www.tnsi.com/robocall-scam-of-the-month

