

2023 Robocall Investigation Report

By Transaction Network Services



Media Summary

The Headlines

Robocalls Continue to Trend Down, This Time by 11% in 2022

VoIP Originated Calls are Still the Largest Portion of Robocalls

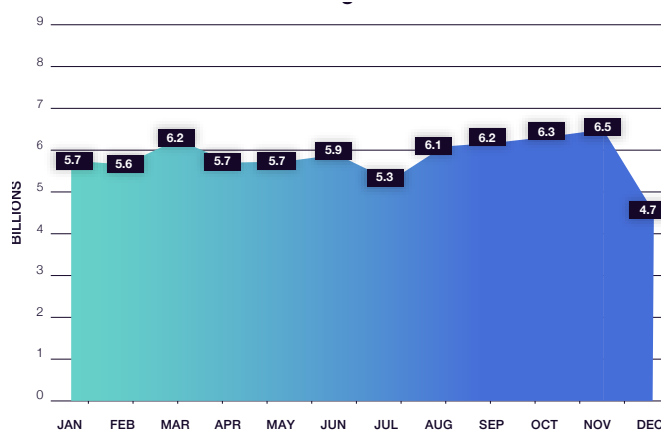
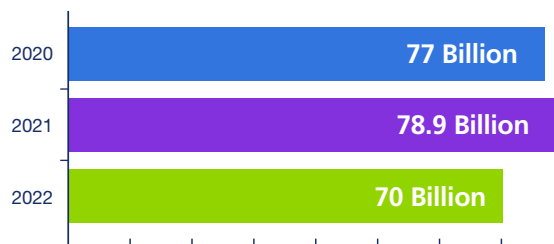
Americans Received Nearly 35 Million Robocalls in the 14 Weeks Leading up to the 2022 US Midterm Elections

A New Financial Scam was on This Rise Known as 'Pig Butchering'

Americans received 70 billion unwanted robocalls in 2022, which is down by 11% from 2021 when 78.9 billion robocalls were reported. This good news shows that consumers are increasingly benefiting from the FCC-mandated STIR/SHAKEN implementation to combat robocalls.

Only 8% of this volume originated from the top-seven US carriers (AT&T, Charter, Comcast, Lumen, T-Mobile, UScellular and Verizon). However, this is up from 5% in 2021, potentially indicating that bad actors are continuing to deploy low-volume spoofing across large Tier-1 telephone numbering resources.

Unwanted Robocalls



VoIP originated calls are still the largest portion of robocalls. In 2022, nearly three quarters (73%) of all unwanted robocall traffic originated from VoIP numbers and 54% of wireless line type calls were unwanted. Seventy percent of all carriers intercarrier calls and 74% of top carriers intercarrier calls were signed as legitimate.



Top Scams of 2022

'Pig Butchering' Scams

A new scam was on the rise in 2022 that focuses on building a relationship with the intended victim in hopes of convincing them that they are investing money into cryptocurrency. Often referred to as 'wrong number scams' or 'pig butchering scams' the targeted victim will receive a text message via SMS, WhatsApp, or other messaging platforms from an unknown number. The goal of the message is to be vague enough so that the receiver will believe the sender has the wrong number and will answer them. Once the text is answered, the fraudster will attempt to build a relationship through these conversations, with the goal of allowing the targeted victim to become comfortable with talking about investment.

Amazon Refund Trick

There are many scams where the fraudster poses as Amazon. A common one in 2022 involved fraudsters impersonating an Amazon sales representative who convinces their target victim to give them remote access to their account so they can issue a refund. This allows the scammer to gain access to credit card numbers and other personal information. Amazon has stated that any calls from customer service would be an expected one. This scam could also be run under the guise of other retailers.

Student Loan Scams

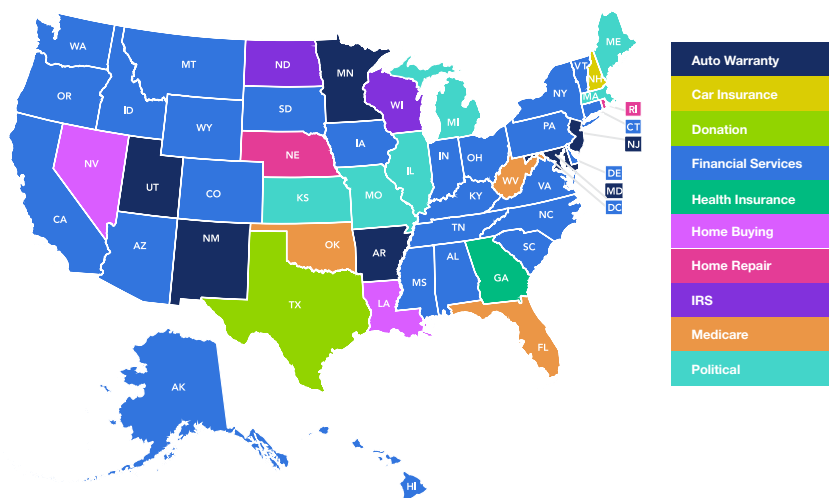
Student loan scams have been around for a long time, but fraudsters continued to tweak their techniques in 2022 to become more topical and realistic. Some scammers use an interactive voice response system to find people who will answer the call and interact with them. If the potential victim responds yes, they will likely receive a text with a link, or be transferred to a live agent who may try to obtain their credit card and other information.

Listen to a student loan scam recording, [here](#).

Fake Tax Compromise Program

The scam artists behind these robocalls in 2022 posed as tax preparers and targeted people who owe large amounts of back taxes that could easily be swayed to hand over personal information for what they think is tax relief. Scammers may send out thousands of spam calls to find victims or target specific individuals by searching tax lien notices. Those who continue the call will be connected to a live agent who will attempt to obtain personal information, likely resulting in identity theft. They may also ask for upfront fees, redirecting the victims' funds to themselves.

Top Scams by State for 2022



The Midterms Affect

TNS calculated that Americans received 625,000 robocalls on election day alone and nearly 35 million robocalls in the highly active 14 weeks leading up to the 2022 US midterm elections. That relentless barrage of calls convinced nearly six in 10 voters (59%) that robocalls and robotexts were used to try and undermine confidence in the midterm elections, according to [TNS survey data](#).

625,000 sounds like a big number but it is a far cry from the 8.25 million political robocalls that voters received in 2020. As we know, presidential election years have more intense voter communication efforts than the midterms and the height of the pandemic in 2020 shifted traditional boots-on-the-ground canvassing tactics to phone, text and other digital communications.

Survey data also told us that 73% said that the difference between legitimate 2022 US midterm election robocalls and robotexts and those containing false information is sometimes unclear. This is compared to 51% in 2020 who said it was hard to tell the difference between a legitimate US presidential election robocall/robotext and one with misinformation.

Despite the growing challenge of being able to tell the difference between legitimate election robocalls and those containing false information, over half of US adults (53%) would answer a political robocall if the Caller ID was displayed. This shows the power branded calling could have in helping to restore trust in voice calling during campaign season.

Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, California and Iowa received the most political robocalls in the week before election day (October 31 – November 6).

States With Highest Number of Robocalls Before Election Day

	Florida	Pennsylvania	Ohio	California	Iowa
August 1 - August 7	49,726	51,833	122,364	112,233	4,914
October 31 - November 6	1,103,360	864,731	383,172	206,029	198,159
Percentage Increase	2,119%	1,568%	213%	84%	3,933%

The states that were targeted most with political robocalls on election day were Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida, Texas and Illinois. While Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan and California received the most political robocalls the day before on November 7.

November 8 - Election Day

	Political Robocalls
Pennsylvania	263,413
Ohio	86,543
Florida	58,941
Texas	57,032
Illinois	31,866

November 7

	Political Robocalls
Ohio	119,658
New York	73,253
Pennsylvania	38,627
Michigan	31,965
California	22,459

If you are interested in speaking to a TNS representative about the initial Robocall Report findings, please contact us at tnsi.com/media