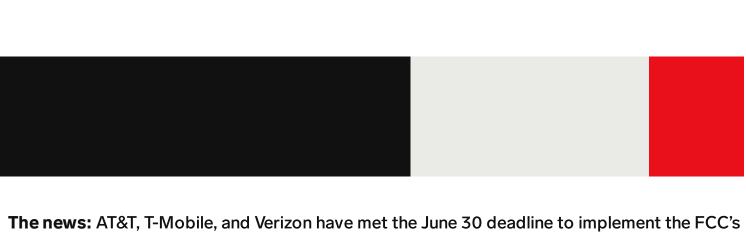


## Big 3 carriers adopt FCC standard to reduce spam calls

**Article** 



**The news:** AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon have met the June 30 deadline to implement the FCC's "STIR/SHAKEN" antispoofing protocol, per Engadget. Compliance with the protocol will help better protect subscribers from spam calls and phone scams, and marks the biggest unified action by wireless carriers against one of their customers' biggest annoyances. Smaller carriers have until June 2023 to adopt the protocol.





More on this: Consumers were pestered by an estimated 45.9 billion robocalls in 2020, per a YouMail report. While there have been various smartphone apps and tools to help block spammers, they require end users to install them on their devices and have shown mixed results.

The STIR/SHAKEN protocol works at the network level to automatically show a caller's true phone number, a first step to stopping spam callers from pretending to be someone else. It is the latest effort to combat spam and robocalls, many of which originate overseas.

Why it matters: Phone scams and spam calls have a detrimental effect on consumers.

- Eighty percent of US adults say they won't answer calls from unknown numbers, per a July 2020 Pew survey.
- In 2020, **242 million people** were registered in the US' **National Do Not Call** Registry, per Statista.
- While there has been a downward trend in spam calls, they are still yielding considerable **financial losses:** US residents lost **\$29.8 billion to phone scams** in the past year, according to a new report from Truecaller and The Harris Poll.

Why this could succeed: Being an FCC-sanctioned protocol means that carriers are required to participate in STIR/SHAKEN in order to be effective. Smaller carriers that want to remain competitive will likely follow the Big Three, leading to wider adoption.

Managing a protocol of this magnitude across various companies is a huge undertaking. As of March 2021, more than 100 carriers had been processed to be approved to obtain SHAKEN certificates. There are currently **278 providers** registered, according to **Bob Grant**, director of product management at **Iconectiv**, who cited participation by (all) telephone companies as being "exceptionally important in stopping illegal robocalling at the source."

It remains to be seen if carriers can adhere to the **protocol** in the long term. STIR/SHAKEN isn't giong to completely eradicate spam and robocalls, but it should significantly reduce the volume of scam calls.