

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" antispooofing 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 going to completely eradicate spam and robocalls, but it should significantly reduce the volume of scam calls.