Future of Messaging (FoM) Fraud & Revenue Assurance **Working Group**

14th of February 2024



Anti-Trust Policy



- Anti-trust law prohibits agreements (written or implicit) between competitors that may negatively impact consumers or competitors and sharing of confidential information
- Anti-trust violations do not require proof of a formal agreement. A violation may be alleged based upon the mere appearance of unlawful activity.
- All meeting participants must abide by the following rules:
 - DO clearly identify the positive purpose of each project and follow it
 - DO NOT enter into agreements that restrict other parties' actions
 - DO NOT give rise to barriers to market entry
 - DO NOT discuss or exchange specific, confidential or commercially sensitive data on pricing, promotions and business plans
- Anti-trust laws do not prohibit petitioning the government, educating and informing the public, improving quality and safety standards, or protecting the public from fraud.

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- Nick Rossman
- Lead (interim) for Future of Messaging Programme

Director of Products



- Ross Flynn
- Project Manager

Project Manager

Working Group Administration



 If you would like to add your colleagues to this or any other working group then all you need to do is to email us at WG@mobileecosystemforum.com with all the details name, email address and list of groups they would like to be added to

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FoM Fraud & Revenue Assurance Working Group



MISSION

To defend the long-term success of all Business Messaging channels, protecting customers and industry stakeholders from fraud and abuse, optimizing customer experience

DELIVERABLES

- Monthly forum for the review and discussions of new threats
- Whitepaper/reports/infographics/webinars/videos/social media to educate the market and stakeholders
- Creation of best practices for securing customer experience and revenue flows (FoM Best Practice)
- Aligning MNOs with pro-active approaches to managing the security and monetisation of Business Messaging

FOUNDING MEMBERS

- AdaptiveMobile
- Aegis Mobile
- **ANAM Technologies**
- **BICS**
- BT/FF
- Cellusvs
- **GMS**
- Globe Teleservices (GTS)
- iBasis
- imimobile
- Infobip
- Intis Telecom
- iTouch Messaging
- LANCK Telecom
- Mobilesquared
- Nettzer
- Ooredoo
- Orange
- Route Mobile
- Sinch
- **TATA Communications**
- Telefonica
- TelQ
- **Vox Solutions**



Artificially Inflated Traffic

- · 1) The lay of the land
 - 2) MEF initiatives 2022-23
 - Next Steps:
 - Improved Industry collaboration
 - Strengthening self-regulation and quality benchmark
 - Disseminating commercially available solutions
 - 3) Gap analysis
 - Proof of concept
 - 5) Next steps





Artificially Inflated Traffic:The need for clarity in definition

What is AIT?

GSMA

SMS traffic that is generated for the fraudulent purpose of generating revenue associated with its delivery for certain parties in the SMS traffic chain.

SMS AIT traffic is typically disproportionate to the overall amount of traffic that would be expected from a good faith usage or acceptable and reasonable commercial practice.

AIT characteristics include no motivation by the sender brand to communicate any content within the message to a recipient end user, and the motivation is typically for financial gain to one party at the unauthorized expense of one or more others.



Application to Person SMS

Artificial Inflation of Traffic (AIT), aka Artificial Generated Traffic (AGT), occurs when a party generates automated messages to fake, invalid or legitimate numbers with the intent to:

- Artificially force an originating Enterprise to send A2P SMS to a destination that is not a legitimate customer of that Enterprise or send A2P SMS not requested by a legitimate user of that Enterprise.
- Artificially force and defraud an originating Enterprise to pay a downstream vendor (SMS aggregator or MNO) to send the artificially generated traffic.

AIT contributes to the forced transfer and cascading of money from the sending Enterprise being defrauded to the downstream fraudster that artificially generated the traffic as they can control and collect the revenue of traffic to the destination numbers.

Person to Person SMS

- Artificially force an originating MNO Mobile subscriber to send P2P SMS to another MNO.
- Artificially force an originating MNO Mobile subscriber and its MNO to pay a downstream vendor (a P2P SMS aggregator and/or another MNO) for artificially generated P2P SMS traffic.



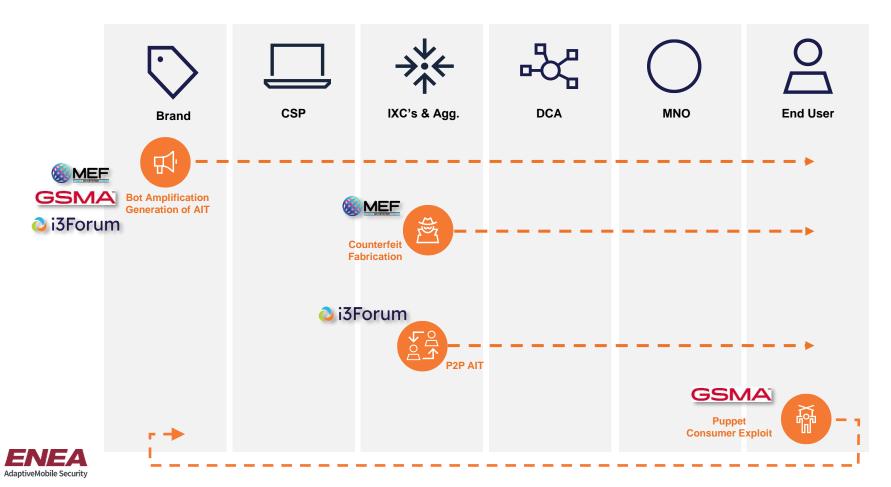
Two overarching types of Artificial Inflation of Traffic (AIT) fraud types.

The first is **defrauding a business**, by having bots in the guise of fake users send out one-time-password verification SMS via the business' messaging account to a number for which the fraudster is part of the SMS delivery chain. The fraudster makes a profit directly or indirectly from the messages at the business' expense.

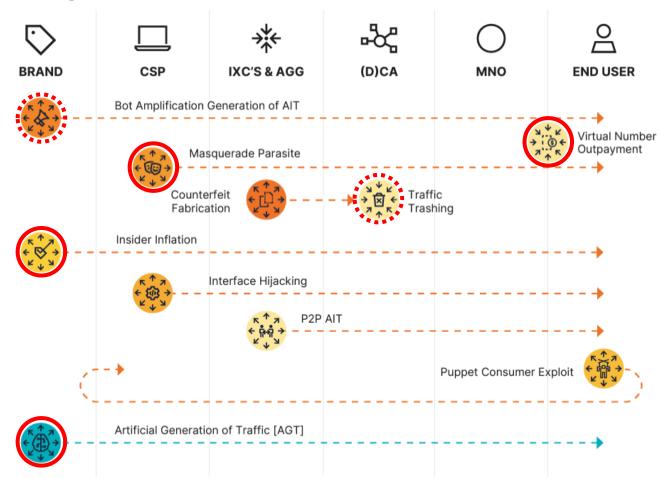
The second is **defrauding a mobile operator**, by generating messages sent to virtual numbers controlled by the fraudster that generate an outpayment. The fraudster makes a profit as the cost of sending the messages is lower than the outpayment



Is the AIT Issue Well Understood?



Enhancing the Definitions





Defining the Main AIT Types

Counterfeit Fabrication AIT

1

Traffic is generated "in transit" by one of the aggregators in the chain and is not visible at that point in the flow, or by any other aggregators who may be terminating traffic to the same destinations. It is a deliberate action by the generating aggregator to generate fake traffic impersonating that of a brand, hence the counterfeiting association.

Amplification Bot Generation of AIT



This fraudulent attack generates synthetic traffic at the brand by exploiting fake accounts within the service, or unprotected service interfaces. It is difficult to control (with low false positives) across the message ecosystem as originating intelligence is not available (eg account ID, IP address used etc). The purpose of this AIT attack is to generate traffic from within the brand's service that passes through the full chain, typically generating revenue for each stage in the chain, at the cost

Masquerade Parasite Generation of AIT



The purpose of this AIT attack is similar to those described above but differs as the brand or "aggregator partner" accounts are created at the CPaaS provider. These attacks have the express purpose of generating artificial traffic associated with brands that the account has no responsibility for, potentially blending the fake traffic with legitimate traffic, which has most likely been acquired through an existing aggregator relationship.

Interface Hijacking AIT



This AIT fraud attack compromises the API's into the CSP and is used to generate fraudulent traffic. As with Counterfeit Fabrication AIT, the purpose of this attack technique is to generate additional traffic. The difference between this attack and the alternative techniques identified above, is that the CSP is compromised and not the brand.

Puppet Consumer Exploit for AIT



One method of generating traffic for the purpose of AIT is by having mobile operator subscribers generate the traffic unknowingly or unwittingly. There are a number of techniques to achieve this: malware, SMS apps, device hacking, and social engineering via SMS URI and SMS Wangiri.

Insider Inflation AIT



Artificial traffic is deliberately generated by the brand to inflate the number of active transactions or active users within the brand. It may be done using a range of techniques, such as bots or via brand API potentially making this fraud distinguishable from legitimate scenarios.



Addressing AIT

Definition

Measurement

3 Solution availability

4 Best practices agreement

5 Gap identification





www.Enea.com



Dario Betti, MEF

MEF Activities (socialization)



Awareness & Alignment:



Blogs



Webinars



Events





Reports

Artificially Inflated Traffic – The Latest Menace in SMS

ly MEF | January 12, 2023

Enterprise Communications, MEF Webinars & Workshops

LINK: Uku Tomikas

Why should a Mobile Network Operator worry about artificially inflated traffic?

By MEF | August 3, 2023

Enterprise Communications, Guest blog

LINK: Joanna Kuligowska, HAUD



Will AIT Surpass Smishing and Spam as the Industry's Top Concern?

Artificially Inflated and Artificially Generated traffic is an increasing problem for the Telecoms industry. We will explore the size and impact of this problem and discuss some potential solutions.

- · Dario Betti, CEO MEF
- Brian D'Arcy, Director of Telecom Business Development Infobio
- . Tim Biddle, Director of Operator Relations Sinch
- · Kevin Britt, Product Owner, Messaging British Telecom
- Simeon Coney, Head of Business Development Enea Adaptivemobile Security





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White Paper - Safeguarding the long-term future of international SMS*:

• White paper (to be published shortly) in conjunction with:















*Tentative title

MEF Activities (Code of Conduct)



MEF Code of Conduct:

- Currently 53 signatories
- Encourage more members to sign code of conduct
- Beef up:
 - Section addressing AIT
 - Monitoring process
 - Enforcement:
 - Members only do business with signatories?
 - Penalties?
 - Dispute mechanism?



V2.0 of MEF's Business SMS Code of Conduct was launched December 2020. The Code is part of MEF's self-regulatory Trust in Enterprise Messaging service with the goal to accelerate market clean-up and help educate business messaging solution buyers about the threats of fraudulent practices and poor procurement processes.



It sets out best practice for all actors operating within the business SMS sector and is based on 10 principles offering detailed guidance on commercial, procedural and technical requirements.



MEF Activities - Messaging



In summary, the message is:

- 1) Better Industry Collaboration:
 - a. Exchange of non-confidential data "centralized" database
 - b. Track flow of traffic
 - c. Global standards (brand identity)
- 2) Better ways to combat AIT fraud
 - a. Adapt existing solutions
 - b. New solutions to address gaps
- 3) Socialization:
 - a. Continue educating the ecosystem, including regulators, brands, MNO's and aggregators

Produce a comprehensive list of companies that offer AIT anti-fraud solutions and potentially add it to the MEF website, such as:

- BICS
- Telesign
- Vox Solutions
- Lanck Telecom
- GTS
- Sinch
- Twilio
- Haud
- AB Handshake

Breakdown of solutions by those aimed at:

- ✓ Enterprises
- ✓ Operators
- ✓ Aggregators





AB Handshake

Dmitry Sumin

AB HANDSHAKE'S EXPERTISE

AB HANDSHAKE IS A GLOBAL PROVIDER OF TELECOM FRAUD PREVENTION SOLUTIONS FOR OPERATORS AND ENTERPRISES

160+

Operators protected worldwide

4.5 MLN

SMS AIT identified monthly

2+ MLN

Fraud call attempts blocked daily

CONTRIBUTING TO:



GSMA Telecommunication ISAC







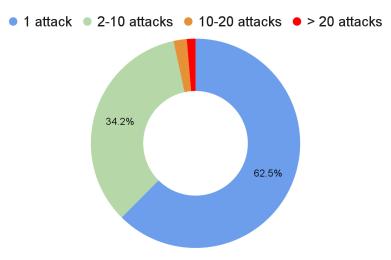
REPEATED NUMBERS IN ATTACKS

AB HANDSHAKE'S RECENT STUDY:

Total analyzed records between November 2022 and April 2023 - **19,222** (attacks not individual calls).

- One attack per single unique fraudulent number range shown in 62.5% (12,005) of records.
- 34.2% (6,566) used for between 2 and
 10 attacks.
- 2.0% (392) used in 10 to 20 attacks.
- 1.3% (259) used in 20 or more attacks.

Diagram: Percentage for numbers





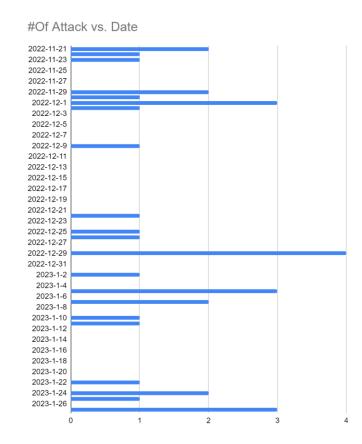
DIFFERENT CASE STUDIES

Case study #1. Belgium country code

Range of numbers **32480338** was involved in **39** fraudulent attacks between January 21 and February 27, 2023.

Case study #2. Zimbabwe country code

Number range **26377** was involved in **34** fraudulent attacks between November 21 and January 27, 2023.





VOICE ATTACKS

Time (UTC)	Service Name	Industry	Fraudster's number
15.06.2023 18:40	Rapid Solutions	Engineering	range 18683500
15.06.2023 18:00	FedEx - Customer Service	Retail	range 18683500
11.06.2023 09:21	TravelBrands	Travel	1246dsvv996
11.06.2023 09:21	Red Label Holdings Inc	Travel	1246dsvv996
20.05.2023 02:40	Kerner Maschinenbau l Landmaschinen für	Manufacturing	1868cfxf000
20.05.2023 02:15	BLM GROUP USA	Manufacturing	1868cfxf000
04.06.2023 17:49	Casa Amrica Catalunya	Govermental	4179gdfa480
03.06.2023 22:41	Boss Private Clients	Financial	4179gdfa480
02.07.2023 04:10	C S Malbrook Ltd	Other Services	range 355677310
01.07.2023 01:50	TMKN Property	Property	range 355677310
05.05.2023 22:14	Blevins Franks	Financial	range 2312100
05.05.2023 23:15	Jetex - Global Headquarters	Aviation	range 2312100
26.04.2023 23:17	LIFESTYLE EXPERIENCES GROUP SL	Other Services	range 37322295
25.04.2023 23:08	Educators Consultancy Company	Educational	range 37322295
26.04.2023 23:59	Sociedad General de Importaciones Galea,	Manufacturing	range 37322295
23.02.2023 02:20	loverzen.com	Retail	2637dvuz8520
23.02.2023 01:53	Cityacademic Ltd	Retail	2637dvuz8520
28.01.2023 00:40	River Bluff High School	Educational	range 126447628
07.01.2023 00:25	Forts Pond Elementary	Educational	range 126447628
12.03.2023 00:50	Hôtel de ville	Travel	range 26132044
14.03.2023 01:50	Sutter Garage Sarl	Automotive	range 26132044
22.06.2023 17:05	IT service	Information techno	range 355677319
24.06.2023 22:10	Inspira Medical Center	Health	range 355677319



SMS AIT ATTACKS

Time (UTC)	Service Name	Industry	Fraudster's number
26.05.2023 22:57	Odnoklassniki	Social media	4477uuzf5037
01.06.2023 09:13	Telegram	Social media	4477uuzf5037
16.06.2023 16:34	Lidl	Retail	3809zcad2078
07.06.2023 23:05	Viber	Social media	3809zcad2078
04.06.2023 13:28	GitHub	Information technology	23490fgsx3183
01.07.2023 00:14	OnlyFans	Entertainment	23490fgsx3183
04.07.2023 07:45	Discord	Social media	7986xxsx181
04.07.2023 08:52	Viber	Social media	7986xxsx181
22.05.2023 16:19	Mailru	Social media	3375dzcu809
22.05.2023 19:11	Uber	Transport	3375dzcu809
12.05.2023 12:51	Payoneer	Financial	23490gcsf7648
28.06.2023 19:10	Booking	Travel	23490gcsf7648
21.05.2023 09:14	Snapchat	Social media	63905uugz080
04.06.2023 19:03	Yango	Transport	63905uugz080
28.05.2023 21:38	Zvuk	Entertainment	7771gadu000
10.06.2023 12:04	Uber	Transport	7771gadu000
14.06.2023 22:31	Microsoft	Information technology	7771gadu000
19.06.2023 10:51	Headhunter	Recruitment	7771gadu000
21.06.2023 05:55	Apple	Information technology	99650cfxs131
30.06.2023 16:59	EpicGames	Entertainment	99650cfxs131
01.06.2023 17:56	Amazon	Retail	99650cfxs131
13.06.2023 22:12	Stilio	Retail	968gsas0647
14.06.2023 18:51	Trovo	Social media	968gsas0647



AB HANDSHAKE PROPOSAL

SMS AIT fraud awareness sharing database:

- Timestamp
- Sender ID
- Terminating number range
- ...

Smishing attack awareness sharing database:

- Timestamp
- Sender ID
- Terminating number range
- Link / domain
- Text (description)
- ..







Console Connect

Carlos Dasilva



February 2024

MEF - AIT mitigation enforcement

Carlos DaSilva

AIT or **not AIT**?



Sender ID	Content	Destination number	Could it be AIT ?
22000	G-354124 is your Google verification code	+12423224444	Maybe, Abnormal volume of OTP SMS towards a fix number
22000	G-765165 is your Google verification code	+12424342844	Maybe Abnormal volume of OTP SMS towards a mobile number suspected to be a SIMbox
22000	G-765163 is your Google verification code	+12424659955	No way to be sure, It's a real mobile user number
22000	G-765168 is your Google verification code	+12424342877	SMS was trashed by an aggregator, MNO never received it



It is impossible to substantially mitigate AIT traffic by accurately blocking it.

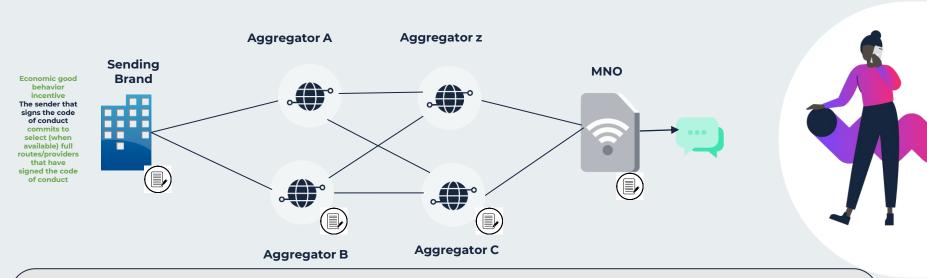
The proof is in the volumes

Despite many commercial solutions and industry education, AIT has been increasing at fast pace over the years, and nothing seems to be able to put a real dent to the growth of AIT.

How do we put down a fire: remove oxygen How can we put down AIT: remove the cash

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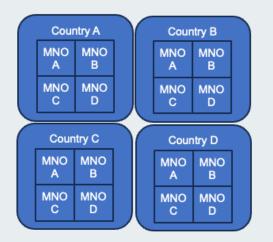
Code of Conduct (could) state that **if AIT fraud is suspected, the portion of traffic that is suspected to be AIT, is not paid** to the downstream provider and is also not invoiced to the upstream sender

The suspicion of AIT fraud and (frozen) volume of AIT traffic is:

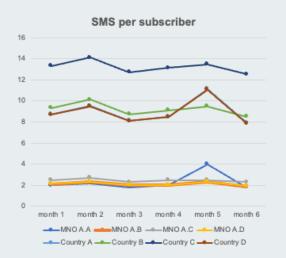
- the delta with **the reference given by a up-to-date market reference** for normal SMS/subscriber for other networks in the same country or SMS/subscriber in neighboring countries previous quarter
- Or **an arbitrary SMS/subscriber for a group of brands** for a country destination agreed between signatories ahead of time and actualized by an industry body on a quarterly basis

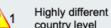
Use shared and trusted patterns from an industry @ consoleconnect crowd sourced database to identify AIT volumes

(no need to know which SMS are AIT to block them)



SMS per subscriber is a normalized and effective solution to compare networks, countries, regions





Highly different upward increase may indicate AIT at the country level



Highly different upward increase may indicate AIT at the MNO level



Constant upward higher volumes may indicate AIT at the country level



Use shared and trusted patterns to identify AIT volumes



Over than 90% of the International A2P market is made of 20 brands that send SMS OTP.

The canary tracker in Insight is a group of representative A2P brands, anonymized as a total combined volume, and used to track, compare and analyze International market traffic trending







Possible artificial traffic



Possible Loss of SMS OTP, market substitution





The end





Telesign

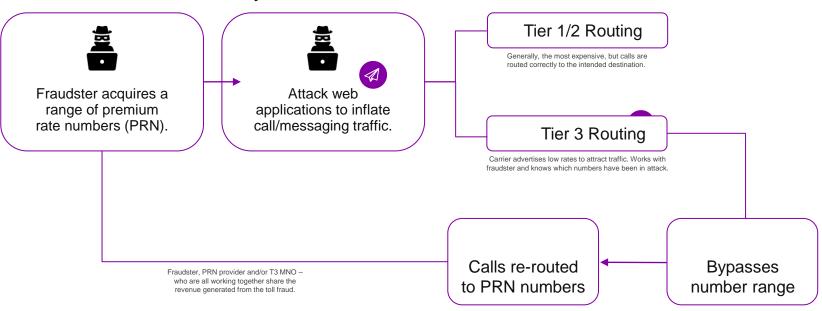
Shannon Donohue



Assess the risk of a phone number before inbound and outbound engagement.

Learn how

How Fraudsters artificially inflate traffic

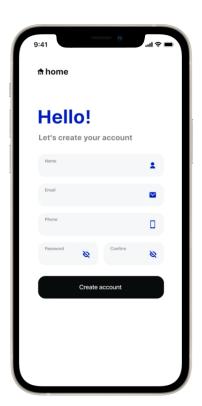


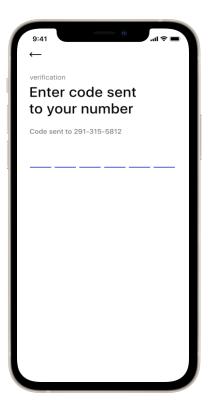
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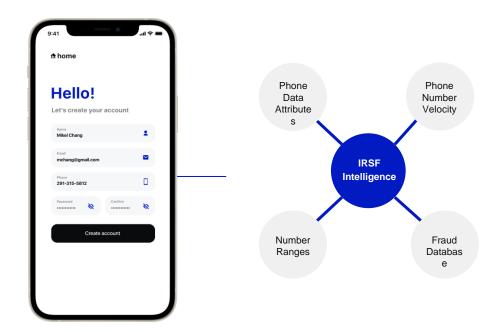
Fraudster Acquires a Range of Numbers

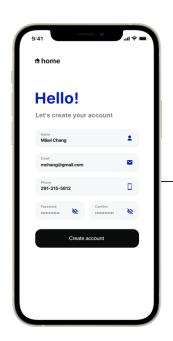
291-315-5804 291-315-5805 291-315-5806 291-315-5807 291-315-5808 291-315-5809 291-315-5810 291-315-5811 291-315-5812 291-315-5813 291-315-5814 291-315-5815 291-315-5816 291-315-5817 291-315-5818 291-315-5819 291-315-5820





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Phone type

Mobile, fixed line, non-fixed VOIP, toll-free, premium rate, invalid etc.



Carrier

Verizon, AT&T, Orange, O2, Jio, NTT, Vodafone etc.

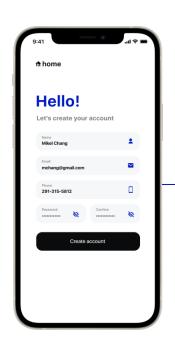


Block listed

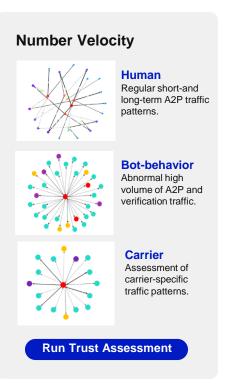
True or False

Run Trust Assessment

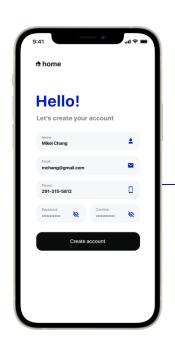
















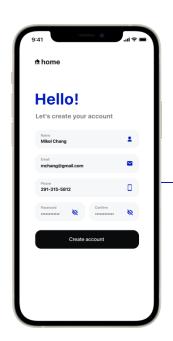
Benchmark against Telesign's proprietary fraud consortium

2B+ Unique Phone Numbers

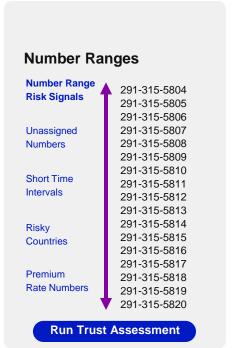
Of the largest web properties contribute

Run Trust Assessment

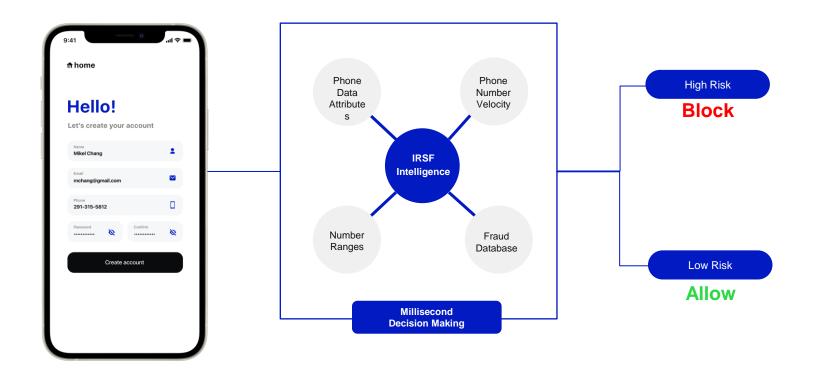
















Vox Solutions

Teodor Magureanu & Ehsan Ahmadi



Sinch

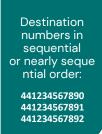
Mykhailo Odarchenko

AIT Detection and Mitigation

Q How do you detect AIT?











AIT is an issue for the entire messaging ecosystem threatening operators, SMS providers, and brands.

AIT Detection and Mitigation



What we can do to stop AIT

Technical:

- Implementing AIT Detection and Prevention Systems
- Proactively blocking high-risk AIT destinations
- Setting volume limits towards high-risk AIT destinations

Commercial:

Creating industry accepted process for handling AIT:

- Dispute handling
- Payment blocking
- Routing improvement
- Closing coverage towards "AIT destinations"



Twillio

Mike Piccirilli



SMS Traffic Pumping Protection Products & Features



SMS Traffic Pumping Prevention Products



Programmable Messaging



Q Lookup



SMS Pumping Protection

Automatically detects and blocks SMS pumping with the Programmable Messaging API.

- Built into Programmable Messaging for customers with OTP use cases who do not want to or cannot migrate to Verify
- Can be used for multiple messaging use cases
- Effectiveness:
 - o FP Rate: 0.5%
 - Block Rate: ~95% of fraud

Lookup SMS Pumping Risk Score

Checks a phone number for known or suspected SMS pumping schemes with the Lookup API.

- Provides raw intelligence including Fraud Guard data on current or recent blocks
- User controls when to block traffic depending on their risk tolerance
- Can be used across providers for multisourcing customers
- Effectiveness:
 - FP Rate: 0.1% 2% (user defined)
 - o Block Rate: 85-95% of fraud

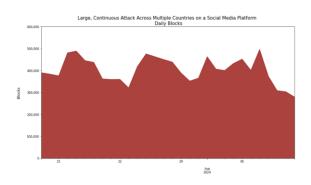
Verify Fraud Guard

Automatically detects and blocks SMS pumping for OTPs with the Verify API.

- Highest efficacy of blocking SMS pumping with lowest false positive rate
- User customization of risk tolerance level (3 modes)
- Tailored to OTPs
- Effectiveness:
 - Basic: ~90% Block Rate, 0.1% FP Rate
 - Standard: ~95% Block Rate, <1.0% FP Rate
 - o Max: ~98% Block Rate, <2.0% FP Rate

Features & signals based on: destination country, carriers, providers & aggregators, prefixes, and individual phone numbers

Very Small, One-time Attack in Uzbekistan Lasting only −20 minutes ## Final Block Asset 55% ## Final Block Asset 55% ## Size Blocked ## S



"The Party's Over"

Customer Value

Twilio has consistently been blocking between 1.5M - 2.5M fraudulent OTP requests per day, providing a daily savings between \$200k-\$400k. We've thus far saved our customers close to \$100M. Blocking AIT not only reduces customer expenses, it also increases conversion rates and reduces user acquisition costs.

Al Solutions Built for All Company Sizes

Whether it's a small start up or global enterprise, anyone with an exposed API can be hit with fraud. Our products are built to detect and respond to shifts in behavior and *begin blocking fraud within seconds* with minimal false positives, saving a customer thousands and even millions of dollars in fraud charges.

Continued Investment to Fight Against AIT

Twilio is committed to fight against AIT fraud. Some of our products come with a full guarantee against AIT fraud charges.



Monty Mobile

Imad Ismail

AIT Prevention





Global Connectivity Within Reach

About Monty Mobile

A Leading Global SMS Hub, Roaming Broker and Mobile VAS Provider.

Founded in 1998 as a member of Monty Holding Group.

We work closely with worldwide mobile operators, aggregators, and enterprise to facilitate the international flow SMS across global markets.



Products & Solutions

Roaming Solutions

- · Roaming Plus
- · Multi-IMSI
- · RID (Roaming in Dimensions)

SMS Solutions

- · International A2P SMS Monetization
- A2P/P2P SMS Hub Services
- SMS Firewall
- · Flash Call Blocking Solution
- · Digital Verification Suite

Enterprise SMS Platform

- · Monty Communication Platform
- · SMS Gateway
- · SMS Management Platform
- SMS Alerts

Fintech

- · Monty Mobile Virtual Credit Card
- · Digital Wallet

eSIM Instant-Connectivity Platform

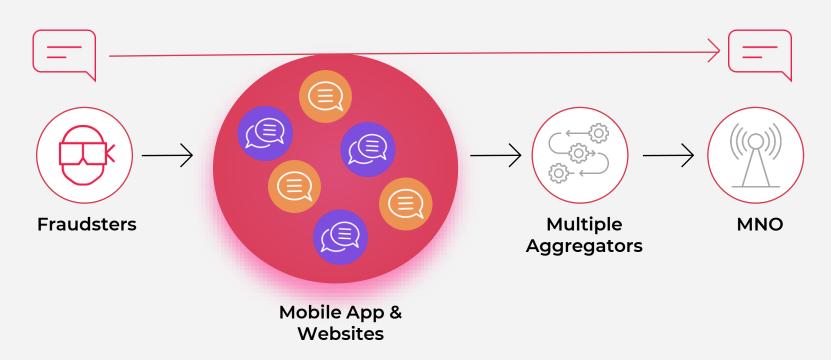
Value Added Services (VAS)

- · MM Virtual Credit Card · Back to Coverage
- · M-Analytics
- Collect Call
- M-Rewards
- · Call / Data Lending

- · Revenue+
- · MM Game Portal
- · My RBT/ M-VRBT
- · MVB (Mobile Virtual Banking)
- · Call Signature
- · Parental Control
- · Self-Care App.
- · Sponsored Call
- · Call me Back
- · M-Challenge
- · Back to Coverage



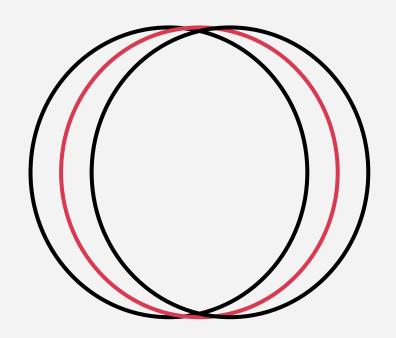
AIT Flow





AIT Market Status

- Traffic Analysis
- Spikes & Anomaly Detection
- Traffic Routing Configurations
- Latest ML technologies for Auto-Detection
- Filtering Technologies
- Choosing Trusted Partners
- Strict Login Process (Captcha, IPs...)





AIT Detection & Prevention - App/Web Hop

- Identify the Unique Parameters/Values per each Registration
- Not to allow "Unique ID" to Register with Different Phone Numbers within X
 Duration
- Consider Different Bypass Mechanisms
- Business User Behavior



What's Next?

Internal SDK for Mobile Apps and Script for Websites Live POC

AIT Prevention





Thank You

We're here to help your business grow!



Never forget that if you have any interesting reports, press releases, updates etc. of your own, MEF can get you more brand exposure by publishing these in our regular member publications – for example, our weekly newsletter which goes out on a Friday to 15k people

Email MEF's Global Communications Manager Sam Hill – sam@mobileecosystemforum.com

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Our Next Meeting



12th of March 2024:

Focus on potential solutions to AIT:

- Create a compendium of commercially available anti AIT solutions for our members
- Identify potential AIT solutions that are currently not available in the market, which could be hosted by MEF, if necessary (noncompetitive)