The Secret to Undermining Fraud? Outwitting Fraudsters Through Smart, Real-Time Data

By: Steve Legge
CEO, netnumber

The battle against bad actors and fraudsters in the global communications landscape is ongoing — and for good reason. A new report shows scammers siphoned off over $1.03 trillion from consumers globally in 2024 with phone calls and text messages as the most popular method of initial contact.

Add to this, heightened consumer scrutiny and tightened regulatory requirements and it's clear that the race to combat malicious activities is more urgent than ever. The industry hasn't taken this issue lying down, developing numerous tools that undermine fraud at various points in the connection journey. Yet, today's increasingly sophisticated fraudsters continue to slip through the cracks, and telecoms, brands, and subscribers are paying the price.

What's needed now is trusted, up-to-date visibility into the validity of where our communications are going and who they are going to. Today, brands, enterprises, and communications service providers must find trusted, reliable solutions that keep calls and texts safe while also ensuring routing is as accurate as possible.

The Rise of Digital Identity

There was a time in the not-too-distant past when phones were strictly calling devices. But as digital transformation took hold in society, cell phone technology evolved to provide a host of functions — from texting to emailing to internet connectivity. Beyond that, our phones have become part of our digital identity.

In fact, today's smartphones and associated voice and text phone numbers serve as unique identifiers, used by enterprises and brands for account authentication. While this is convenient for customers and vendors, it has unwittingly created a focal point for fraudsters to hatch numerous schemes. To thwart their efforts, the industry needs the ability to verify and validate phone numbers in real time.

The State of Phone Number Vetting and Verification

As the de facto identifier in a mobile-first world, the phone number has become the one constant that cuts across the various fraud techniques. Yet with billions of phone numbers and a myriad of daily interactions, successfully monitoring the connection journey remains complex.

Optimizing fraud prevention means covering both messaging and voice communications from origination to termination — an inherently intricate and varied process. For example, it is possible for a given phone number to be a valid destination for voice calls but invalid for text messaging and vice versa.

This kind of complexity is what renders many of the static, limited phone number ranges and DNO (Do-Not-Originate) lists in use today useless and outdated.

The Power of Phone Number Intelligence

If data is at the core of fighting fraud and delivering optimized routing, then what does that data look like?

The right phone number data must be:

- Granular
- Accurate
- Delivered in real-time
- Normalized

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Put simply, providers need to know the likelihood of a phone number anywhere in the world being valid or invalid based on comprehensive, up-to-date data sets, DNO information, and sophisticated logic that wraps it all together. Not only does this build and maintain trust for end users, but it empowers providers to avoid routing traffic originating from or destined to invalid numbers, reducing the costs associated with delivery.

The good news is that this capability already exists within the telecom ecosystem. For example, netnumber's Number Check is a sophisticated solution that validates phone number accuracy in real time across over 200 countries, with more extensive verification capabilities available in more than half of those countries.

With a simple, API-based implementation, Communication Service Providers (CSPs) and business enterprises can quickly identify and halt the transmission of suspicious numbers before they reach their intended targets — a capability that quickly translates into improved customer experiences, reduced transaction costs and a safer and more secure delivery system. cca