ROBOCALLING - CALL BLOCKING GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS

DOA Enterprise Telecom Services

Abstract

General information about robocalling call blocking in a VoIP/SIP environment

Scope

- Agencies have seen an increase in the number of nuisance calls and robocalls when they have migrated to Voice over Internet Telephone (VoIP)
- This document provides background and guidelines for how you may get around these types of calls impacting State agencies today.

Definitions and Background

- **Robocalling and neighbor spoofing** is an issue impacting users across business/consumer VoIP and wireless services.
  - Robocallers and scammers spoof local phone numbers using the same area code and prefix (NPA/NXX) to increase their chances of having their calls answered.
- **War Dialing:**
  - Robocallers will target a range of phone numbers and dial them with no concern of who owns those numbers. Once done with a war dialing campaign, robocallers will move onto the new number range.
  - Multiply that by the number of different robocallers targeting the same number ranges and you can see why the issue is so prolific.
- **Future Technology:**
  - Industry experts and telecom service providers are leading efforts to develop intelligent solutions that can analyze calls and intelligently block the scam calls based on IP address, call duration, phone number and other techniques. The FCC has mandated telecom service providers to have this technology in their infrastructure by July 2021. With COVID-19 impacts, this date may be extended.

Guidelines and Recommendations

- **VoIP/SIP Call blocking features** are reactive and not effective as spammers/robocallers are constantly switching between different networks, spoofing phone numbers and IP addresses to evade static defense systems.
- **Concerns** with blocking numbers in DET Managed VoIP/SIP environment
  - DET Managed SIP Trunks
    - System allows blocking a specific inbound number from calling a specific user number.
    - No way to effectively monitor or manage these number blocks.
  - Neighbor spoofing helps scammer get calls answered as people think it's someone local calling.
  - Can increase the chance of blocking a constituent's number.
  - Research and due diligence are critical before blocking <u>any</u> phone number.
- **Blocking phone numbers**
  - We will not block a Wisconsin based phone number (262/608/414/715/920) as the number could belong to a citizen that may need to call a state agency in the future.
  - Numbers aren't permanent. A scam call today can be a constituent's phone number tomorrow. Caller ID spoofing throws another wrench in the "block this number" process.
  - <u>Caution and due diligence</u> must be taken before blocking ***any*** number.
    - Always call the numbers to confirm they do not belong to a real person or legitimate business.
    - It's possible that a number you had blocked can cause downstream issues for the owners of those numbers.
- **Options**
  - Harassing / Abusive Calls – calls from a single number to a single person with repeated instances.
    - Engage Capitol Police to investigate
    - Block number as needed only after other options have been exhausted to stop the harassing calls.
  - Robocalls / SPAM
    - While home and cellular users can ignore calls from phone numbers that are not recognized, State employees, especially call center agents do not have that luxury.
    - Hang up. Chances are good you will not see another intrusive call from this number.

- **DO NOT CALL** lists are meant for consumer phone numbers such as landline and cellular. You can register a business phone number, but it is discouraged. Besides, scammers do not follow DO NOT CALL rules.

AT&T Response on Robocall Prevention

- AT&T Public Policy Office provided the State with two documents (links below) on AT&T's latest steps in preventing robocalling.
- DOA internal review summarized that these documents don't provide new solutions and offers no timeline for adoption by the Telecom service providers.
- Here is the links to the documents if you chose to read/review them.
  - Robocall Handout
  - Robocall - 1.14.2019 Rosenworcel Response

Document History/Owner

Version	Approval/Revision/ Review Date	Approver/Author-Title	Description
1.0	Approval 02/19/19	Author: Ron Garske	Published version Approved by Connie Bandt
1.1		Updated content for DET Mgd SIP: Ron Garske	