

SMART VOICE TELECOM CORP ROBOCALL MITIGATION PLAN

I. Background

The Federal Communications Commission (“FCC” or “Commission”) has adopted rules requiring voice service providers, like Smart Voice Telecom Corp (“Smart Voice”), to, among other things, file certifications and robocall mitigation plans in the FCC’s Robocall Mitigation Database (“RMD”). 47 CFR § 64.6305; *see also Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Sixth Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 23-18 (Mar. 17, 2023) (“*Sixth Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*”).

The FCC requires that all voice service providers certify in the Commission’s RMD whether they have implemented the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework, and that all of the calls that it originates, carries or processes are subject to a robocall mitigation program consistent with the Commission’s rules.¹ The provider’s mitigation plan “shall include reasonable steps to avoid originating illegal robocall traffic and shall include a commitment to respond within 24 hours to all traceback requests from the Commission, law enforcement, and the industry traceback consortium, and to cooperate with such entities in investigating and stopping any illegal robocallers that use its service to originate calls.” 47 C.F.R. § 64.6305(a)(2).

Despite imposing a general duty to mitigate “robocalls,” the Commission’s codified rules do not define “robocall.”² The TRACED Act defines “robocall violation” as “a violation of subsection (b) or (e) of section 227 of the Communications Act of 1934.” TRACED Act § 11(d), Pub. L. No. 116-105, 133 Stat. 3274 (2019); *id.* at § 13(d)(f)(3) (defining a “suspected unlawful robocall” as a “call that the Commission or a voice service provider reasonably believes was made in violation of subsection (b) or (e) of section 227 of the Communications Act of 1934.”

¹ See <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-24-73A1.pdf> (WCB Jan. 25, 2024 Public Notice).

² The Commission’s TCPA-related regulations, 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200, use the undefined term “illegal traffic,” 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200((k)-(m)), while its STIR/SHAKEN-related regulations define the FCC’s public-facing Robocall Mitigation Database, but not the “robocalls” that are to be mitigated. 47 C.F.R. § 64.6300. Thus, neither of the regulations that bear directly on the project of robocall mitigation expressly define “robocall.” *Cf. In re Advanced Methods to Target & Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls*, CG Docket No. 17-59, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making, 32 FCC Rcd. 9706, 9725 ¶ 56 (Nov. 17, 2017) (declining to define “illegal robocall,” and acknowledging that “the record shows confusion regarding how the proposed definition of ‘illegal robocall’ should apply to the call blocking rules.”); *In re Core Communications, Inc., et al. Tariff F.C.C. No. 3*, WC Docket No. 21-191, Order, 36 FCC Rcd. 9997, 9999 (June 23, 2021) (In a related context, stating that the “Commission defines a robocall as a call made using an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice.”) (citing 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1); 47 CFR § 64.1200(a)). Smart Voice therefore focuses on the two types of unlawful calls—227(b) and 227(e) of the TCPA—that Congress expressly addressed.

Thus, Smart Voice’ training and mitigation efforts focus, as they must, on potentially unlawful calls that violate either (a) 47 U.S.C. § 227(b) (governing non-emergency calls initiated with a prerecorded or artificial voice or an automatic telephone dialing system, as that term has been interpreted by the Supreme Court in *Facebook, Inc. v. Duguid*, 592 U.S. 395 (2001)) or (b) 47 U.S.C. 227(e), or the Truth in Caller ID Act, which prohibits people from causing “any caller identification service to knowingly transmit misleading or inaccurate caller identification information with the intent to defraud, cause harm, or wrongfully obtain anything of value,” absent an applicable exemption.

The FCC’s rules contemplate that the provider’s plan should describe how it “complies with its obligation to know its customers pursuant to § 64.1200(n)(4), any procedures in place to know its upstream providers, and the analytics system(s) it uses to identify and block illegal traffic, including whether it uses any third-party analytics vendor(s) and the name(s) of such vendor(s).” 47 C.F.R. § 64.6305(d)(1)(ii). The Commission has acknowledged, however, that, “we do not currently require [] providers other than gateway providers to engage in ‘know-your-upstream-provider’ procedures, [but] if they have put such procedures in place, they must be documented in their robocall mitigation plan,” and that “we do not specifically require providers to use call analytics.” *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Report and Order* ¶ 40 & n.155-56.

The Commission has explained that a robocall-mitigation program is “sufficient if it includes detailed practices that can reasonably be expected to significantly reduce” the provider’s origination or carriage of illegal robocalls, and the voice service provider complies with the practices described in its plan. *Sixth Caller ID Authentication Report and Order* ¶ 31. Smart Voice is dedicated to developing and taking reasonable steps. This document outlines Smart Voice’s robocall mitigation plan.

II. Smart Voice’ Know Your Customer (“KYC”) Standards

Smart Voice is a voice service provider that focuses its business and operations on the business end user customer segment of the voice services communications market. As part of its customer-onboarding process, Smart Voice undertakes various commercially reasonable precautions to verify a given customer’s identity as part of entering into a formal written agreement.

All prospective customers participate in an enrollment process supervised by Smart Voice staff. Among other data points collected and, as appropriate, verified, as part of those processes Smart Voice gathers the following customer-identifying facts and circumstances:

- Customer business name,
- Company email, phone number, and website domain,
- state or country of incorporation,
- physical business location,

- contact person(s), and
- Federal Tax ID (EIN).

Smart Voice then verifies the customer's corporate name and status with the records of the State where the customer's corporate status originated.

Smart Voice also collects various written details about the prospective customer's intended use case(s) for their Smart Voice service, including the nature of their business and campaign, how they ordinarily acquire the numbers they typically call, and, if their proposed use case includes sales calls and/or is not solely live-agent calls, their consent and/or scrubbing practices vis-à-vis wireless numbers and numbers on the DNC Registry, among other considerations.

III. Smart Voice' Acceptable Use Policy

As part of its customer-onboarding process, all of Smart Voice's customers contractually agree to various terms and conditions, including a commitment to comply with Smart Voice's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Among other things, this AUP prohibits:

- Using the Services to engage in any activities that are illegal, abusive, false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading, or any activity that exploits, harms, or threatens to harm children.
- Engaging in any unsolicited advertising, marketing, or other unlawful activities using the Services, including, without limitation, any activities that violate laws applicable to advertising, electronic communications, and telemarketing, including, but not limited to, Section 5 of the FTC Act (15 U.S.C. § 45), the CAN-SPAM Act (15 U.S.C. §§ 7701-7713), the Telemarketing Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act (15 U.S.C. §§ 6101-6108), the Federal Trade Commission Telemarketing Sales Rule (16 C.F.R. § 310 et seq.), the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (47 U.S.C. §§ 227), the Federal Communications Commission regulations (47 C.F.R. 64.1200 et seq.) and orders implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, and all federal and state Do Not Call and calling-time restriction laws and regulations.
- Creating a false identity, forged email address or header, phone number, or otherwise attempting to mislead others as to the identity of the sender or the origin of a message or phone call, including failing to comply with the Truth in Caller ID Act.

Smart Voice can suspend and/or terminate all Services in the event of an AUP violation.

IV. Telephone Number Authorization and STIR-SHAKEN Capabilities

Smart Voice has fully implemented the STIR/SHAKEN authentication framework across its entire network, and all calls for which it serves as the originating carrier are compliant with 47 C.F.R. Sec. 64.6301(a)(1)-(2).

Smart Voice's end users can only use telephone numbers to which they have subscribed from Smart Voice or numbers they can verify that they have been assigned from other carriers.

V. Proactive Network Monitoring and Analytics

Smart Voice has various monitoring and reporting systems available to analyze traffic on its network for potentially suspicious traffic patterns that are likely to be associated with illegal robocalls or other potentially unlawful usage. For example, Smart Voice's switch provider and monitoring systems can assess traffic based on various criteria, including data relating to short-duration calls, SDP/SDR, answer-seizure ratios, call-failure (404) ratios, and ANI Cardinality Ratio, a measure of uniqueness in the ANI distribution to help identify any suspicious calling patterns. Smart Voice uses third-party mitigation tools provided via its underlying switch provider, including RoboGuard.

If Smart Voice detects a pattern consistent with illegal robocalls, or has reason to suspect illegal robocalling or spoofing is occurring on its network, Smart Voice takes prompt action to identify the party that is using its network to carry these calls and take appropriate action. Once suspected unlawful traffic is discovered, Smart Voice blocks any further traffic from being carried associated with the Media IP address of that suspicious traffic.

VI. Commitment to Timely Traceback Responses and Cooperation

Smart Voice commits to respond fully and in a timely manner, within 24 hours, to all traceback requests from the Commission, law enforcement, and the industry traceback consortium, and to cooperate with such entities in investigating and stopping any illegal robocallers that use its service to originate, carry, or process illegal robocalls. Smart Voice will dedicate sufficient resources to provide timely and complete responses to such requests, and will investigate suspicious activity found by its monitoring systems or reported to it by appropriate parties and take appropriate action.