Telecom Fraud Alerts

Fraud Alerts July – September 2014

Liberia's largest SIM Box operation busted

The Liberia Telecommunications Authority or LTA's Anti Fraud Unit uncovered the largest illegal SIM Box network operation with the help of the Justice Ministry and took possession of close to 3,000 unregistered active SIM Cards used to facilitate Grey Routing.

The LTA warned that international call appearing on cell phone as a local number is an illegally routed call known as Grey Routing. This practice, according to the LTA, is on a sharp national increase, robbing the telecommunication sector of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

Fraudsters used a SIM Box which is about the size of a DVD player to house unregistered SIM Cards connected to their network. Incoming international calls were then diverted from the designated GSM Service Provider and government monitored signal routing points to illegal SIM Box terminals, making international calls appear as local. LTA agents detected signals from a particular area using SIM BOX detector equipment and conducted the raid.

All SIM cards seized belong to one of Liberia's largest operator and investigation is in process to determine the monetary value of loses. Last year over USD$400,000.00 was lost in the sector due to just one SIM BOX operation.

**Source: www.africanewswire.net, August 2014*

Huge PBX Hacking racket costs American operator $24 million

Police have busted a syndicate that had been hacking into the system of a large U.S operator since 2011 and cost them as much as $24 million in losses following the arrest of six suspects.

It was first noticed that a large amount of unauthorized calls were originating from the Philippines using the PBXs of clients of the American operator. Police then undertook an investigation and began monitoring the call activity, concluding that the syndicate had hacked into the PBXs and used these numbers as unauthorized access devices.

The hackers used to operate by making outbound calls to international toll-free numbers in the US using their land line or mobile phones; once they got through they would then dial the number of the target hacking victim. They then use the hacked PBX's to dial high-cost international premium rate (revenue share) numbers.

**Source: www.sunstar.com, August 2014*

SIM BOX Fraud busted in Ghana

One of Ghana's leading operators in collaboration with the National Communications Authority (NCA) and the Ghana Police, cracked down a full-fledged SIM BOX operation in Accra. Simboxing is the act of diverting international calls from legitimate gateway channels operated by Telecom Operators and terminating them in the recipient's appliance as local calls, which are cheaper than the foreign calls.

The suspects have been operating for 6 months and have diverted two million minutes of international calls to Ghana, resulting in total revenue loss of GH¢3,093,200 ($836,000) to both the state and the telecom operators.

**Source: www.allAfrica.com, September 2014*

Identity Fraud: Complex mobile phone scam targeting students cracked down

University students in Surrey are being warned to remain vigilant after a number of victims fell for a complex scam, running up large telephone debts in the process. Fraudsters have been offering students cash incentives to sign up for personal mobile phone contracts, which are then being used for the benefit of a private company.

Invariably, students subsequently receive a high value smart phone on a lengthy contract, but then send the phone and SIM card to the private company for a small, often monthly, cash incentive. It is believed these students may have revealed sensitive details about their bank accounts, credit or debit cards and personal circumstances to the scammers, making them susceptible to identity fraud.

**Source: www.actionfraud.com, August 2014*

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