Understanding the Global Threat of Mobile Fraud

The Communications Fraud Control Association (CFCA) periodically conducts a survey of fraud around the world, and the latest survey revealed that fraud now amounts to 1.7 percent of revenues in the communications industry annually. In particular, the survey identified roaming as being specifically vulnerable to fraud.

To shed more light on this type of fraud, we at Syniverse have developed our own set of data that offers valuable insights to expand on the CFCA findings. The report below represents our first step in this process.

The data reveals trends that offer an important global snapshot of fraud and one that may be useful to the industry in our collective drive to combat this rising threat. This data summarizes roaming fraud for one complete year, based on work with over 130 mobile operators globally.*

One Year of Fraud Data: May 1, 2015, to April 30, 2016

Number of Countries in Which Fraud Was Identified: 162

Number of Fraud Incidents Detected: 115,516

Number of Mobile Operators Included: 132

Fraud Attacks and Major Types Detected: 5,302

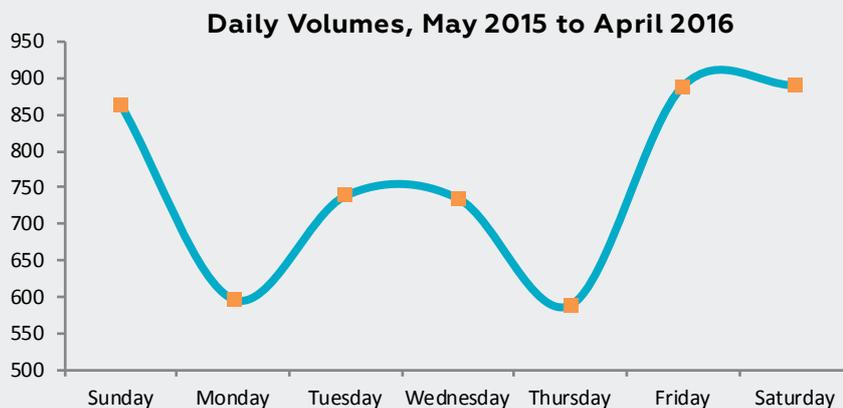**Text Messaging Fraud Attacks: 1,380**

International Revenue Sharing Fraud Attacks: 2,756

Suspicious Roaming-Related Incidents: 1,166

When Fraudsters Strike

The data uncovered how fraud attacks vary throughout the days of the week.

Daily Volumes, May 2015 to April 2016

(Chart: y-axis from 500 to 950; x-axis days Sunday through Saturday. Approximate values — Sunday: 860, Monday: 595, Tuesday: 740, Wednesday: 735, Thursday: 590, Friday: 890, Saturday: 890)

- Most fraud attacks occur on the weekend.
- Mondays and Thursdays are days with the lowest number of fraud attacks.

How do these statistics compare to your own data on fraud?
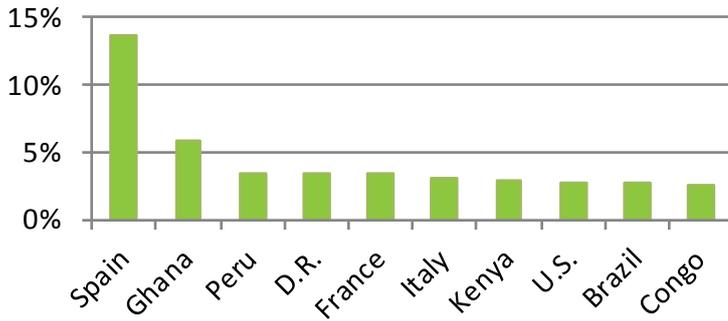Do you see a similar distribution of fraud attacks over the course of the week?

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Where Fraud Originates

Roaming fraud can traverse many routes; understanding its origins is one of the first steps in successfully countering it.

Top Ten Countries by Percent of Case Volume

- **Spain** has emerged as a fraud hotspot, where organized gangs target tourists.
- **Ghana** has been identified as a base for SIM spoofing fraudsters, who typically include visitors from other African countries and the U.K.
- **Peru** has become a preferred destination for Brazilian SIMs that are used to originate international revenue sharing fraud (IRSF) attacks.


- 9%–14%
- 5%–8%
- 0%–4%

Where Fraud Terminates

Insight on where fraud attacks are ending can be even more vital than where they are originating in the battle against roaming fraud.

- **Cuba** has high termination rates that attract significant volumes of inbound IRSF.
- **Latvia** receives a large number of calls that originate in France, Italy, and Peru, by SIMs from Italy, Brazil, and El Salvador, and that then terminate in Latvia.
- Home public mobile networks (HPMNs) in **Brazil** and the **U.K.** have been identified as ones that fraudsters use to originate fraud from Ireland to destinations in **Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

Top Ten Countries by Percent of Case Volume

- 401–700
- 201–400
- 0–200
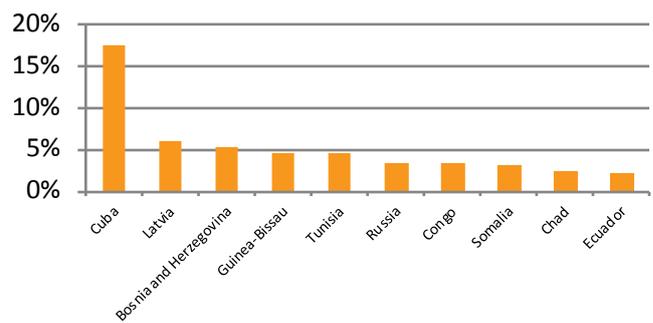
For more information on Syniverse's fraud team, visit **www.syniverse.com/products-services/mobile-protection.**

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