SpamChecker



EBOOK

STIR/SHAKEN Explained.

A plain-English guide to call authentication, attestation ratings, Rich Call Data and what they mean for the calls your business makes.

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CHAPTER 01

What STIR/SHAKEN is and why it exists

For years, it was easy to fake caller ID. Scammers could make a call appear to come from a bank, a hospital or a government agency, and people answered because they trusted the number. STIR/SHAKEN is the framework US carriers use to fight that, by digitally signing calls so the receiving network can check where they really came from.

STIR

Secure Telephone Identity Revisited: the standards for checking that a call really comes from the number shown.

SHAKEN

Signature-based Handling of Asserted information using toKENs: how carriers put STIR into practice.

What it aims to do

- Make caller ID spoofing much harder
- Confirm who is calling and whether they control the number
- Give networks better information to decide how to present a call

What it doesn't do

STIR/SHAKEN verifies identity. It doesn't judge whether a call is wanted, and it wasn't designed to be a complete fraud or reputation system. That's an important distinction we'll return to.

CHAPTER 02

How a call is signed and verified

Between pressing dial and a phone ringing, a call passes through several steps:

1. **The call is placed** from your phone system or dialer.
2. **The originating provider checks** what it knows about you and the number.
3. **An attestation level is assigned:** A, B or C.
4. **A signed token is created** with the rating, a timestamp, the calling number and the called number.
5. **The call travels** across one or more networks.
6. **The terminating provider verifies** the signature and certificate.
7. **A decision is made:** deliver normally, add a label, block, or show verified caller details.

Why the path matters

Calls often cross several carriers. Each hand-off is a point where information can be lost, which is why the providers you use, and the providers they use, affect how your calls arrive.

The terminating provider combines the attestation result with its own analytics, such as the number's history, complaints and calling patterns, before deciding how to present the call.

CHAPTER 03

Attestation levels A, B and C

Level	What the carrier is saying	Impact
A – Full	We know this customer and confirm they're allowed to use this number.	Highest trust. The goal for every business number.
B – Partial	We know this customer, but can't confirm their right to use this number.	Lower trust. Unusual patterns are more likely to be labelled.
C – Gateway	We're passing this call on, but can't vouch for where it came from.	Lowest trust. Frequently labelled or blocked.

How to improve your rating

- Use providers that can sign your calls at A level
- Make sure numbers are properly assigned to your account
- Be cautious with numbers sourced from third parties
- Test attestation after any change to providers or routing

> If a number isn't getting A attestation, start with a conversation with your provider.

Recipients never see attestation levels directly. They see the result: a clean display, a warning or no call at all.

CHAPTER 04

Why an A rating isn't enough

Many businesses assume that once their calls are signed at A, they'll connect. In practice, an A-rated call can still be labelled "Spam Likely" or blocked.

Identity is not intent

Attestation proves who signed the call. It says nothing about whether recipients want it. A legitimate business that calls too often, generates complaints or uses aggressive dialing can still damage its reputation.

Reputation signals

- Call volume and sudden spikes
- Answer rates and call duration
- Spam reports and complaints
- Number history and inbound activity
- Spoofing of your number elsewhere

Bad actors adapt

Fraudsters can still find routes through older systems or exploit weaknesses elsewhere, and AI voice cloning makes scams more convincing. As spam rises, analytics engines become stricter and legitimate numbers get caught more often.

The takeaway

Manage attestation and reputation as two separate checks. Test the first; monitor the second continuously.

CHAPTER 05

Rich Call Data and branded calling

Rich Call Data (RCD) builds on STIR/SHAKEN so that verified details, such as your business name, logo and reason for calling, can travel securely with the call and appear on screen.

	Traditional caller name	Rich Call Data
Source	Looked up by the receiving carrier	Sent by the business with the call
Content	Short text only	Name, logo, call reason
Security	Easier to fake	Protected by signatures

How the logo is protected

Logos aren't sent as image files. Instead, the call carries a secure link and a cryptographic fingerprint, so any tampering is detected and the image isn't shown.

Where it stands

Support is still growing across carriers and devices, so displays vary. Test on real phones, and remember that branding works best on numbers that are already clean.

CHAPTER 06

Checklist for businesses

Authentication

- [ ] Confirm every outbound number receives A attestation
- [ ] Know which providers carry your calls
- [ ] Re-test after any change to numbers or routing

Reputation

- [ ] Monitor numbers across carriers and call-blocking apps
- [ ] Watch volume, answer rates and call duration per number
- [ ] Remediate labels quickly and fix the cause

Identity

- [ ] Keep caller names accurate and consistent
- [ ] Register numbers with caller registries where available
- [ ] Use branded calling or RCD on clean numbers
- [ ] Verify displays on real devices across networks

Compliance

- [ ] Scrub lists and honour opt-outs promptly
- [ ] Document consent and campaigns

SpamChecker

Know how your calls really arrive.

Spam Checker tests your attestation, monitors your reputation and shows you real-device screenshots, so you can see exactly what your customers see before you dial.

Get a quote at spamchecker.co/pricing

Questions? Email info@spamchecker.co

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