



Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Decision CRTC 2020-353

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Bell Canada – Request to extend its trial to block certain fraudulent and scam voice calls

*The Commission **approves** Bell Canada's request to extend the duration of its trial to block certain fraudulent and scam voice calls until the Commission issues its decision regarding the company's new application to make the tested call blocking mechanism permanent.*

Background

1. In *Bell Canada – Application to allow Bell Canada and its affiliates to block certain fraudulent and scam voice calls on a trial basis*, Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Decision CRTC 2020-185, 9 June 2020 (Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Decision 2020-185), the Commission authorized Bell Canada and its affiliates (collectively, Bell Canada et al.) to block verified fraudulent and scam calls received or transmitted from, to, or over their networks for 90 days on a trial basis. The trial started on 15 July 2020 and is scheduled to conclude on 12 October 2020.
2. The call blocking mechanism leverages artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze telecommunications traffic in order to flag anomalies that suggest possible fraudulent and scam activity. These anomalies are then subject to review and, if fraudulent or scam activity is verified, Bell Canada et al. block subsequent related calls associated with the anomalous activity at the network level.

Extension request

3. On 2 September 2020, Bell Canada filed a procedural request in which it requested urgent approval to extend the 90-day trial on an interim basis until the Commission issues its decision on a new application that the company planned to file.¹ This would ensure that the blocking of fraudulent calls is not interrupted while the Commission considers that application.

¹ On 25 September 2020, Bell Canada filed a new application in which it sought the Commission's approval to permanently block verified fraudulent calls using the call blocking mechanism tested during the trial.

4. Bell Canada submitted that the reports filed with the Commission pursuant to Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Decision 2020-185 revealed, among other thing, that in the first 31 days of the trial, more than 66 million fraudulent and scam calls were prevented from reaching Canadians. In addition, during that period, the company did not receive any reports of false positives. Bell Canada submitted that the indisputable benefits of the trial are readily apparent and are further magnified given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused significant disruption and uncertainty to Canadians. Bell Canada submitted that even a short interruption in the continued application of the call blocking mechanism would risk subjecting Canadians to the resumption of millions of harmful calls.
5. Bell Canada committed to continuing to adhere to each of the reporting requirements and all of the other safeguards established by the Commission pursuant to Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Decision 2020-185.
6. The Commission did not receive any interventions with respect to Bell Canada's extension request.

Commission's analysis and determinations

7. As noted above, in Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Decision 2020-185, the Commission authorized Bell Canada et al.'s trial subject to a number of conditions. These conditions included filing monthly reports on the results of the trial, which revealed, among other things, the number of calls of that have been blocked. The Commission considers that an extension of the trial would allow for the continued blocking of tens of millions of fraudulent calls while the Commission considers Bell Canada's new application. In addition, extending the trial would allow for the continued collection of information about the performance of the call blocking mechanism, which would be helpful in the Commission's consideration of the new application.
8. The Commission considers that extending the trial does not raise any new concerns regarding the call blocking mechanism.
9. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that an extension of the trial would be in the public interest.

Conclusion

10. In light of the above, the Commission **approves** Bell Canada's request to extend the trial, subject to the same terms and conditions as set out in Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Decision 2020-185 (including the conditions specified in a separate [letter](#) dated 19 June 2020). The extension is effective until the date on which the Commission issues its decision regarding Bell Canada's new application.

Secretary General