



# FIRST ORION

TRANSPARENCY IN COMMUNICATION

## Scam Call Trends and Projections Report

Fall 2018



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## The Scam Call Epidemic

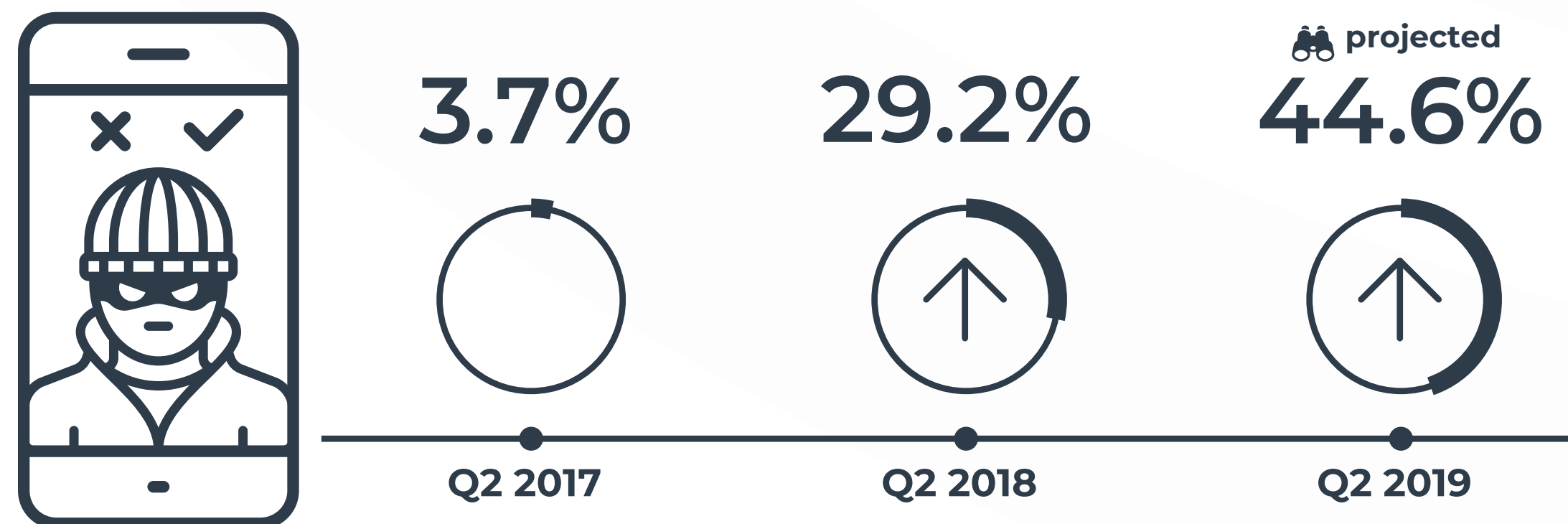
While the scam call epidemic continues to grow, consumers are actively searching for ways to protect themselves against annoying and often fraudulent calls.

First Orion, a leading provider of phone call and data transparency solutions, found these kinds of calls are on an alarming rise.

First Orion powers call protection solutions to tens of millions of mobile subscribers in the U.S. market and has carefully analyzed over 50 billion calls made to these customers over the past 18 months. By combining specific call patterns and behaviors with other phone number attributes, First Orion now predicts that nearly half of all calls to mobile phones will be fraudulent in 2019.

44.6% of calls to mobile phones will be scam calls in 2019

Over the past year, First Orion's data shows a drastic increase in scam calls to mobile phones—from 3.7% of total calls in 2017 to 29.2% in 2018—and that number is projected to reach 44.6% by early 2019.



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## Scammers Ramp Up

As new technologies and tactics cause mobile scams to skyrocket in frequency, consumers may feel like every other call they receive is unwanted. In fact, this isn't far from the truth.

Scam and nuisance calls doubled in the past year

First Orion's analysis projects that 42.1% of all calls will be scam or nuisance by Q2 2019, up from 30.9% in 2018 and 14.4% in 2017. That's nearly half of all calls. Unless widespread action is taken to solve this problem, the rate of scam calls will only continue to grow.





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## Neighborhood Spoofing

There are a number of techniques scammers use to get people to pick up the phone, but the most popular method is known as “Neighborhood Spoofing,” which happens when a scammer disguises their phone number and displays it as a local number on a user’s caller ID.



For example, a scammer may spoof their phone number to match the area code and 3-digit prefix of the person they are targeting and ultimately increase the likelihood of someone answering.

Not only is this tactic harmful towards the person being called, the owner of the phone number used to make the call is often subjected to return calls from the recipient of the scam call. These return calls come as surprises since the owner of the number used to make the scam call is not aware a call was ever placed from their number, leading to frustration and confusion amongst all parties.

*9 in 10 scam calls will be from a familiar area code in 2019*



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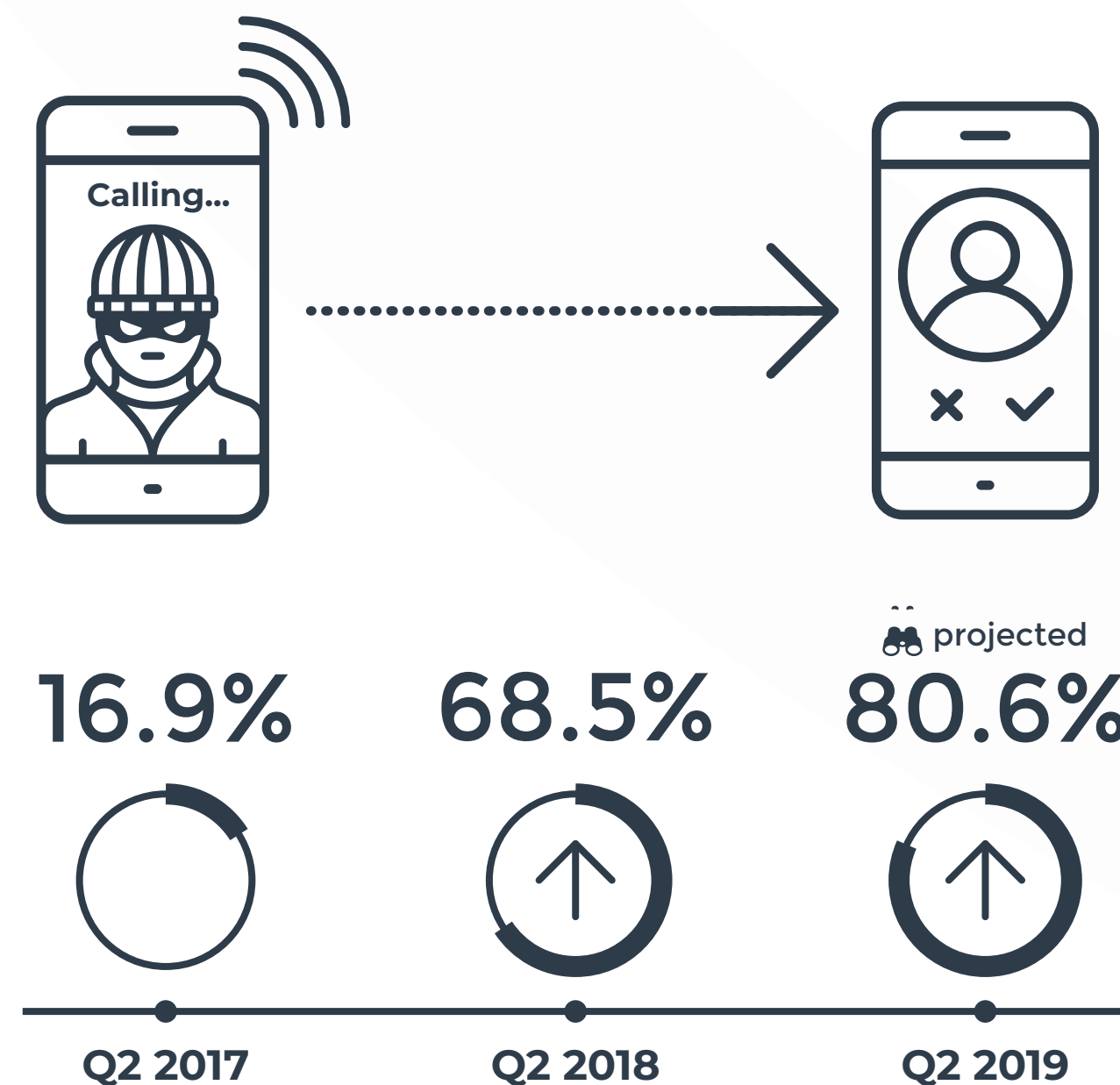
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## Scammers Shift to Mobile

With advancements in technology, scam artists constantly refine their approach to stay ahead of the game; e.g. neighborhood spoofing.

Over the past few years, First Orion noticed an uptick in mobile-originated scam calls as fraudsters make a technological shift in their tactics. By spoofing mobile numbers, scammers are harder to track and can employ a wider variety of tactics through their calls.



*Mobile-originated scam calls are up over 400% from 2017 to 2018*

In 2017, landline-originated scam calls hit its peak but declined shortly thereafter. Mobile-originated scam calls increased from just 16.9% of total scam calls in Q2 2017 to 68.5% in Q2 2018. First Orion projects this will climb to 80.6% by Q2 2019.



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## Landline Scams Decreasing

Scammers aren't using landlines to place their harmful calls nearly as frequently anymore. More often, they're using sophisticated auto-dialers and new tactics like neighborhood spoofing on mobile networks.

First Orion's research found 56% of scam calls were placed from landlines in Q2 2017. This number is projected to decline to just 24.8% in Q2 2019 as more scammers are spoofing mobile networks to place their calls.

As mobile scam tactics become more advanced while landlines are used less frequently, we can expect this trend to continue. More than ever, mobile carriers will have the ability and responsibility to take action against scammers.



*Landline-originated scams projected to decrease by half in 2019*



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## Key Takeaways

Scammers continue to relentlessly inundate mobile phones with scary and increasingly effective calls. Widespread action must be taken to eliminate the multitude of issues within the industry.

- **Mobile Carriers are the first line of defense and must adopt in-network solutions to protect consumers**
- **Consumer awareness is required to ensure they understand what solutions are available and how to avoid getting scammed - billions of dollars are being lost each year by mobile subscribers to scammers**
- **Solution Providers must outpace increasingly innovative scam techniques and mobile applications alone are not the answer**
- **Government Agencies must work closely with the industry to support appropriate solutions**

## About First Orion

First Orion currently provides call control, call blocking, call transparency and call management solutions to millions of mobile handsets. First Orion's Engage™ technology tells mobile subscribers who is calling and why, empowering them with the ability to take action. With branded and white-labeled applications as well as in-network solutions, First Orion assists phone carriers in protecting mobile and fixed line subscribers by identifying and stopping millions of scam calls every day. For more information, please visit [www.firstorion.com](http://www.firstorion.com).

