SIM Cloning

SIM cloning is the process that duplicates a legitimate subscriber identity module. When you complete the SIM process, the cloned SIM card's identifying information transfers to a separate, secondary SIM card. You can then use this secondary card in a different phone while having all calls and associated charges attributed to the original SIM card. The phrase SIM closeis most often used to refer to a successfully cloned SIM card.

A successful duplication hinges on the user's ability to extract the SIM card's International Mobile Subscriber Identifier (IMEI) and Authentication key (Ki). While you can easily identify the IMSI, finding the Ki is generally more difficult for the novice user. You can, however, use separate devices and software programs to decrypt the Ki.

In most countries, it is not legal to engage in activities that can result in SIM cloning. In the 1990s, companies that provided cellular services recognized the problems that SIM cloning presented and started to take measures to thwart the SIM cloning business. New security measures such as embedding security operations make obtaining a SIM clone more difficult. Now, if a SIM card detects cloning activity, the SIM card can render itself inoperable. Whereas a few years ago, you could clone SIM cards by radio, today you need to have physical access to the original SIM card to complete the cloning process.

Though you could more easily clone SIM cards with older models of cell phones, you can still clone SIM cards today. However, successfully completing the cloning process is now virtually impossible. Most of the technology currently available to facilitate cloning can only function on older models of phones. Anti-tamper software on second-generation 3G SIM cards makes cloning new SIM cards and their corresponding devices nearly impossible.

As attractive as obtaining a SIM clone may seem to individuals who desire to use two phones with one phone number, legal and technical difficulties should discourage any efforts to clone SIM cards. Additionally, you may encounter safety issues as a result of using the clone, For example, law enforcement agencies may find it difficult to reach an injured or distressed party should you make an emergency call using a cloned phone because cloning compromises GSM location-based service SIM cards rely on.