

# Defeating Phone Scams with Conversational Al

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## <u>Intro</u>

The global phone scam challenge is growing exponentially



A quarter of all unknown calls are scams or fraudulent

Scammers make 70 million calls globally every single day

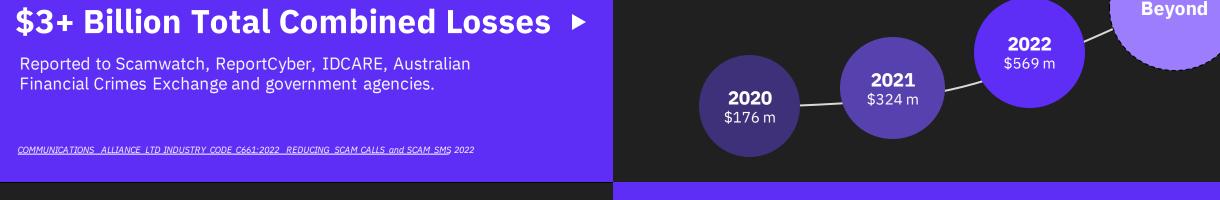
- this costs victims billions of dollars annually;
- degrades consumer trust; and
- damages brand reputations.

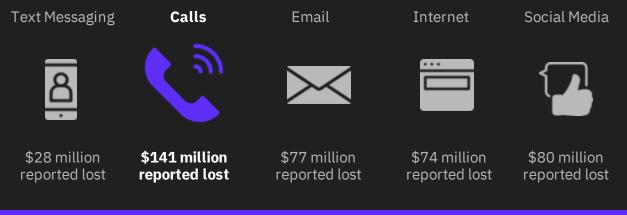
Our mission is to break the business model of scammers to beat them at their own game.

## **Context**

### Scale of the problem in Australia

### **\$3+ Billion Total Combined Losses** ▶



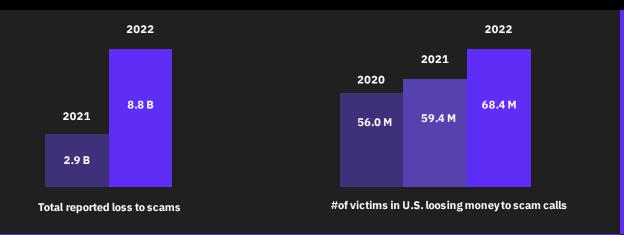


**\$141 Million Reported Lost from** Phone Calls in 2022

COMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE LTD INDUSTRY CODE C661:2022 REDUCING SCAM CALLS and SCAM SMS. 2022

## **Context**

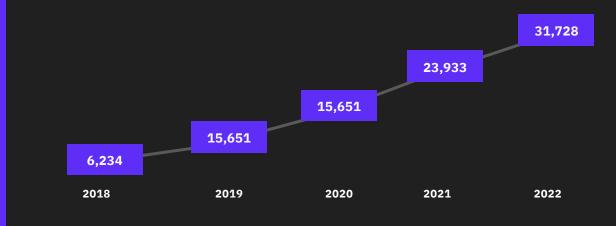
### Reported cases and loses in the US and Singapore



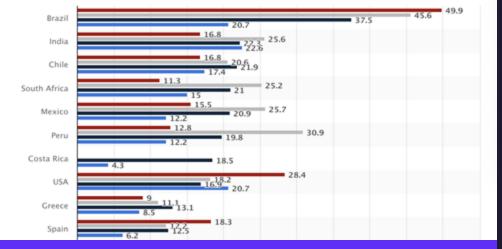
**◆ \$8.8 Billion Reported Loss in US in 2022** 

FTC Report 2022. TrueCaller Data 2022

## An ever-increasing number of cases in Singapore



Singapore Police Force Report, 2022

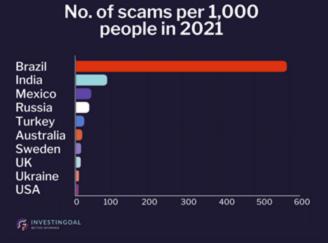




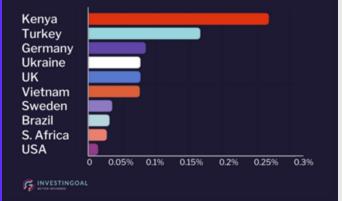
## Number of Spam Calls per User per Month

Petroc Taylor, Statista, 2023

Average monthly number of spam phone calls per user in selected countries from 2017 to 2020, 2023



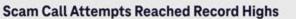


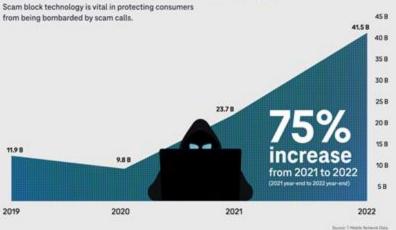


## Constantly evolving and improving scam attempts

T-Mobile Report US, 2022







THE PERSON NAMED IN

## A Global Problem

## Why are scams are still a major challenge

## Root Causes of Scams

Although billions of dollars are spent on scam detection and prevention, billions of dollars are still lost to scammers.



### Technological Aspect

Simple to execute, VoIP makes it easier, Hard to upgrade telecommunications provider infrastructure



### Social Aspect

Mimics real life stories (e.g. ATO), Preys on human emotions and fears, Targets the most vulnerable people



### Monetary Incentives and Financial Challenges

High gain to cost ratio for scammers, Hard to recover scammed money, Costly infrastructure change



### **Prevention and Enforcement Challenges**

Scams originate from foreign jurisdictions, Detection mechanisms overwhelmed, Not enough timely threat intelligence



Behind the mind-boggling statistics are real human beings, who are crippled by debt, traumatised by their ordeal and are stuck wondering how to rebuild their lives.



Nerida O'Loughlin, Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) Chair, May 3rd 2022. **Our Mission** 

# To break the scammers' business model, globally

## Content



**—** 01

### What is Apate.Al?

The Apate Solution

How it Works

**—** 04

### <u>Tea</u>m

Founding team and advisors

University Support

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### Who is Apate.Al for?

**Products** 

Opportunity

**—** 05

### Ask

Seed Investment

Use of Funds

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### **Traction**

Progress & Achievements

Technology Roadmap

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### Appendix

Financial Forecast

Technology



### 01

## What is Apate.Al

## What is Apate.Al (not a mobile-app)

### **Apate offers the perfect Victim Chatbot**



## Our Victim Chatbots are engaging scammers for up to 50 min

### How

#### LLM fine-tuned on call transcripts

- Scam transcripts sourced from multiple channels
- Youtube "scam baiters" and reddit enthusiasts

### Deep analysis of scammer methods

- To identify effective strategies to engage scammers
- We draw insights into scammer methods
- Hard to obtain, sellable info on current scams

#### Early scam detection and alerts

- Trained ML on calls' meta-data for scam identification
- Multi-platform scam detection for extended alerting

#### **Optimised AI for longer conversations**

- Based on success or failure of current strategies.
- Reinforcement learning on call-length and dialogue of self-play.

### **Features**

#### **Diverse Personas**

Pre-Trained on hundreds of hours of real conversations

#### Scam Baiters Minded

Conversation Memory, Trained Objective Function, Shared Mental Models

#### Reinforcement Learning

Over 1000 hours and counting of real scammers conversations

#### **AI Voice Cloning**

Supports convincing Victim Chatbot voices

#### Multi-Lingual

English, Mandarin, Egyptian, German, Russian, Arabic, French and more

#### **Enhanced Conversation Features**

Human-like voice, realistic interplay between interlocutors with injection of disfluencies, emotions, backchannelling and minimised speech delays.

#### **Scam Fitting**

Bot derives intent of the scammer and reacts in a way to deceive them

#### **Context and Category Awareness**

Probabilistic models built on the fly for each category of scam call, inferring conversation status and delaying transitions to the next stage of the scam plot

#### Continuous updates

Containerised solution flexibly adapted, and updates instantly deployed

### **Products**

#### APATE AI.Callee

Calls are redirected to Victim Chatbots with virtually an infinite number of Profiles/Personas

#### **APATE Insights**

Accurate and timely Threat Intelligence for enterprise and government agencies

## A Novel Approach

Breaking the business model of scammers

EXISTING
APPROACH
(REACTIVE)
Detect, Filter and Block

Block

Telco Wall
Potential Mobile App
Detection

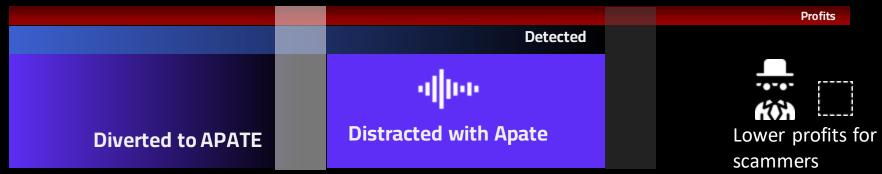
Profits

Profits

High profits for scammers

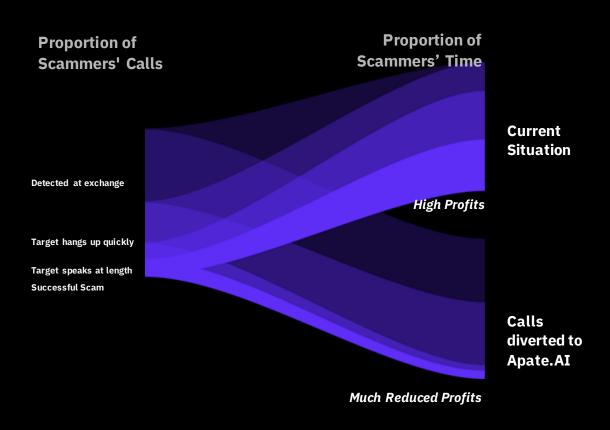
APATE
APPROACH
(PROACTIVE)
Divert, Distract
and Disrupt

Scam calls



## Apate.Al

### From reactive to proactive scam defense



## Current (Reactive) approach to protect phone service users from scammers

- Educate users / share best practices
- Detect/Filter/Block some scam calls
- End users solutions (Mobile apps to detect scam, notifications based on callers reputation)
- Scam intelligence reliant on crowd- sourced victim reporting
  - ▶ Detect, filter & block scam calls on telco (in-house and vendors)
  - ► Educate consumers augment consumer phone with a notification that a call may be a scam (Robokiller, Hiya, TrueCaller, etc.)
  - Intelligence is crowd-sourced post scam losses or reports

### Apate.Al (Proactive) approach

- Conversational AI trained to imitate plausible, realistic scam victims
- Optimized to maximize scam call duration
- Early threat intelligence of "scampaigns"
- Deployable at any Telco network, preventing scammers from reaching actual phone service users
- Agnostic to the location of the scammer and adaptive to the location of the network to protect (Multi-lingual, multiple dialects)
  - ▶ Disrupt & Deter scammers. Respond to and Prevent new scams.
  - A network free of scam calls
  - Extracts intelligence in real-time from scammer conversations

## A feel of what Apate bots sound like

### **Edno**



British, 65 Year Old Male Scam Category: Gift Card

**Overall Emotion: Collaborative** 

Have a listen Transcript

### **Ibrahim**



Egyptian, 62 years old Male Scam Category: Netflix Payments Overall Emotion: Collaborative

Have a listen

Transcript (In Egyptian)

### **Edna**



Australian, 47 Year old Female

Scam Category: Amazon Purchase

**Overall Emotion: Aggressive** 

Have a listen
Transcript

### **Ibrahim**



Egyptian, 62 years old Male

Scam Category: Netflix Payments
Overall Emotion: Collaborative

Have a listen

**Transcript (in Egyptian)** 

### Mary



Australian, 50s Year Old Female

Scam Category: Investment Overall Emotion: Skeptical

Have a listen

**Transcript** 

### **Brad**



American, 25 years old

Scam Category: Social Security Overall Emotion: Cool, chilled

Have a listen Transcript



02

## Who is Apate.Al for?

### **Products**

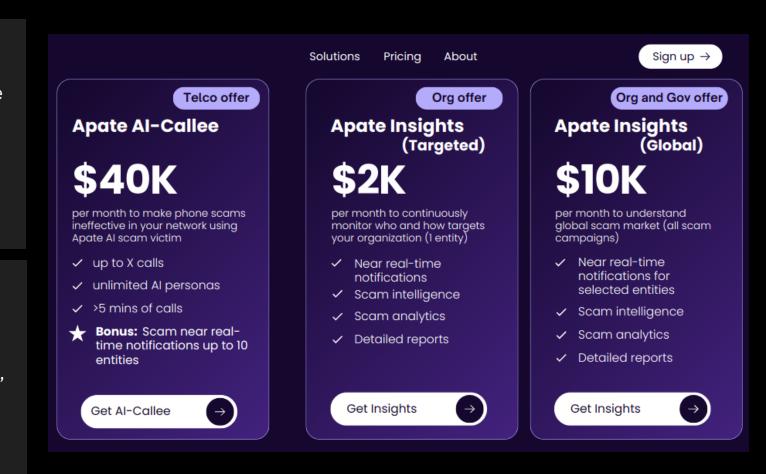
### **Core customer solutions**

### **Apate AI-Callee**

- Calls blocked to be redirected to Apate AI-Callee (SIP or WebRTC)
- Guaranteed Minimum #min per call
- Multilingual Bots to be connected
- Targeted threat intelligence extraction via customisable dashboard and API calls

### **Apate Insights**

- Enterprise and Government agencies receives near real-time notification of scam campaigns
- Threat intelligence includes scam categorisation, scam stages/scripts and scammer narratives
- Periodic (daily/monthly) detailed reports via web portal dashboard and APIs
- Global intelligence sublicensed for all impersonated organisations



## Who Benefits

### **Personas for our Products**

#### **Apate AI-Callee**

### (;)) Telecommunication Providers

Globally, Telecommunication providers spend billions on scam call detection, blocking and filtering.

Legislation requires Telcos to reduce scam calls (e.g., Australia C661;2022 Rules from ACMA "Reduced Scam Calls Code", Operation Stop Scam Calls 2023 FTC and attorneys general from 50 states, TRACED Act 2020, etc.)

 With Apate, increased customers trust and reduced expenditures on detection and blocking

Rules also require telecommunication providers to assist their customers in proactively managing scams and are required to share information about scam and report scam campaigns

With Apate, Efficient Intelligence collection and real-time reporting of "Zero-day" Scam intelligence

### **Apate Insights**



### **Enterprise and Government**

Impersonated businesses and government agencies currently know about campaigns targeting their customers only too late, mostly relying on crowd-sourced intelligence from user reports or scam loss reports/complaints.

- With Apate, real-time and accurate intelligence collection for timely response and prevention of loss. Insights into scammer methods and targets.
- Reduced effort by fraud teams seeking hard to obtain intel on current "scampaigns"
- Less scam complaints and mitigation work



Consumers are all vulnerable to scammers. When not falling for scams, consumers are spammed by undesirable calls, feeling vulnerable and **losing trust** in their phone network and service providers.

- With Apate, a greatly reduced number of scams, consumers regain trust facilitating increased use and sharing of positive sentiment.
- Consumers receive accurate information about current "scampaigns" and receive details on how to avoid falling victim

## Total Addressable Market

### Scale of the opportunity

#### **Apate AI-Callee**

### Telecommunication Providers

Over 25K Wireless telecommunication carriers globally. In U.S., 30 Telcos listed by CTIA (Cellular telecommunications and internet association) have their own infrastructure

On average, 2 to 3 major telecommunication providers per country, all subject to anti-scam regulatory requirements (E.g., ACMA in Australia, FCC in US, ComReg in Ireland, OfCom in UK, MCIT in KSA, etc.)

The GSMA, unites more than 750 operators with almost 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem.

The top 100 largest telecom providers and operators, including Verizon, AT&T, Deutsche Telekom, T-Mobile, NTT, Vodafone, STC and América Móvil, generate over \$1.7 trillion of revenue each year and employ more than 4.5 million people around the world

The global fraud detection and prevention market size was valued at <u>USD 25.67 billion in 2022</u> and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.6% from 2023 to 2030

### **Apate Insights**



#### **Enterprises**

#### Consumer protection

FSI regulators, ASIC (Australia), ACMA, The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) in US, Financial Conduct Authority in UK, The Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (BaFin) in Germany, etc. mandate active defense and prevention against scam related threats to customers.

Non-FSI enterprises with B2C touch points are targeted by scammers across industry verticals including include logistics, media and entertainment including big tech etc. These companies have duty-of-care to advise of "scampaigns" targeting their organisations and customers

The global threat intelligence market size was valued at USD 4.24 billion in 2022 and is projected to grow from **USD 4.93 billion in 2023** to USD 18.11 billion by 2030



#### Government

#### Australia

Nat Sec agencies – ONI, ACSC, ACMA, ACCC (National Anti Scam Centre)

Government agencies – ATO, Services Australia, Services NSW, etc, ACCC/ ScamWatch, Department of Infrastructure Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

#### Global

Government and national security agencies across the world have mandates to be cognizant of current threats impacting their citizens. Similar to Australia, international machinery of government is siloed and there are 2-3 primary agencies and a range of secondary agencies seeking scam intelligence in each jurisdiction.



03

## Traction

## **Key Partners**

### Saudi Telecom

stc

Heads of Agreement to quantify impact on scammers and demonstrate real-time threat intelligence. ~USD\$450K over 12 months

### **TPG Telecom / CBA**





Trial with support from the AEA and Industry Growth programs

### **Deutsche Telekom**



Proof of concept with medium scale, multihorizons collaboration

### ONI





Sponsor and Funder of the Research behind Apate. ~USD\$450K

### **NVIDIA**



Apate selected for Nvidia Inception Program. Free use of NVIDIA HPC, NVIDIA AI, Free cloud credits, on-going Discounts on NVIDIA services

### Octo.Al



Annual support with financial credits and custom low latency deployment

## **POC Performance**

### **Preliminary Results with Early Design Partner**

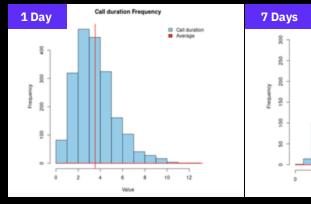


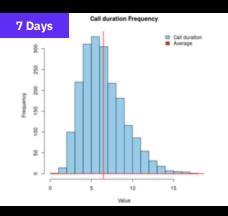
### **Data**

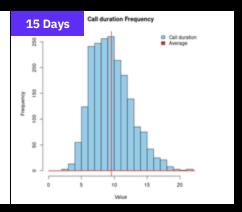
110 hours of Real Human (Scambaiters) Scammer Interactions

### ~14K phone scam calls over 3 months period

- Generated: 91840 min (1530 hours) of conversations between Victim Chatbots and Scammers
- Average call duration 6.56 min
- Reinforcement Learning (No-Yes): 620 910 hours







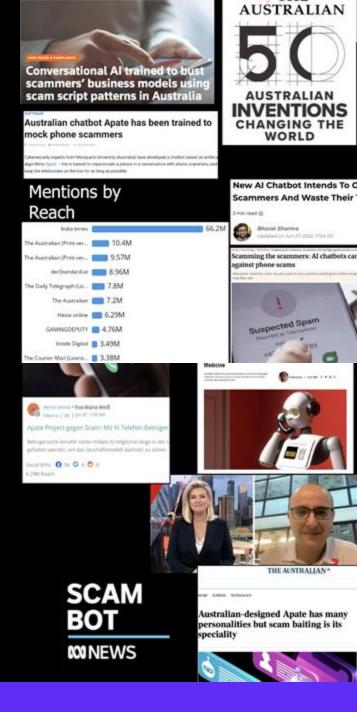
■ Average call length increased from 3.5mins to almost 10 minutes over the course of 15 days training

## Sample Design Partner Program



## **Achievements**

- Generous Funding from the Office of National Intelligence (ONI)
- Recognised as Top50 Australian Innovation of the year 2023
- Founder recognised as Top100 Inventors 2023
- Awarded First prize of the Incubator's Researchers' IMPACT Program
- Advanced PoC partnership trials (12 months + Commercial agreement ~400K USD per year) with STC (KSA). Engagement with Deutsche Telekom (Germany) and TPG Australia
- Over 15K requests from end users worldwide, and media coverage reaching over 150M individuals (Reuters, National TV, India Times, BFM-TV, HeiseOnline, the Australian Podcast) since public launch (July 2023)



## Technology Development Roadmap

### What we've achieved so far (TRL 5)

### **Future Development**

- SIP and Web RTC Integrated
- LLM/GenAI Based Bots
- Diverse AI Personas
- Tailored High-Quality "victim" Voices
- Post Call Intelligence
- Seed data from scam calls on
- Conversation control heuristics
- Multi-Lingual bot (English (3 variants), Mandarin, Egyptian,
- German, Russian, Saudi, French)
- Scalable Pipeline
- Reinforcement Learning Enabled

- Run Cost Reductions (Fraction of a cent/min)
- Near Real-Time Threat Intelligence
- Global Fraud and Scam Alerting
- Language Detection and Cross-Language models
- Automated Personas Generation
- IM (WhatsApp, signal, etc.) and VoIP support



04

## **Team**

## **Core Team**

Born out of Macquarie University supported by the Office of National Intelligence (ONI)

### Dali Kaafar



lan Wood



Michal Kepkowski



Founder & CEO
Professor of Cyber Security
Executive Director Cyber Security Hub

Co-Founder Researcher and AI / NLP Specialist

Co-Founder & Chief Architect Software Architect and DevOps specialist

### Nardine Basta



Connor Atkins



David Plisek



AI Researcher Post Doctoral Researcher Cyber Security and AI Researcher PhD candidate Conversational AI Co-Founder & Operations Serial Founder and Cybersecurity Professional

## Advisors

Apate has assembled a world-class team of Advisors to help build, support, and grow







### Technology Advisory Board

Ersin Uzun (Leading Researcher, Ex-Innovation Manager XEROX PARC)
Simon Kriss (Chief Innovation Officer, Customer Experience Innovation Institute)
Cameron Esdaile (VP of Technology and Innovation, ThousandEyes - CISCO)

## **University Support**

Macquarie University is an Equity Investor

Board member

Exclusive Commercial IP Licensing Research partnership / collaboration

Access to HPC infrastructure

Campus Work
Space and
Admin Support

Research Student Contributions







## **Use of Funds**

### Seed Investment

Apate.AI is seeking **seed funding** for the commercialisation of the AI-Callee and Insights products



### Technology

Product-led development costs associated with the AI-Callee solution and Insights for enterprise and government products.



#### People

Hiring engineers and product managers to accelerate the development of the core products through the design partner programs



### Design Partner Programs

Offset costs for strategic design partners supporting the refinement of product market fit for the telecommunications providers, enterprises and large Government Organisations



### **Customer Aquisition**

Marketing and promotions of Apate.AI to future customers



06

## Appendix

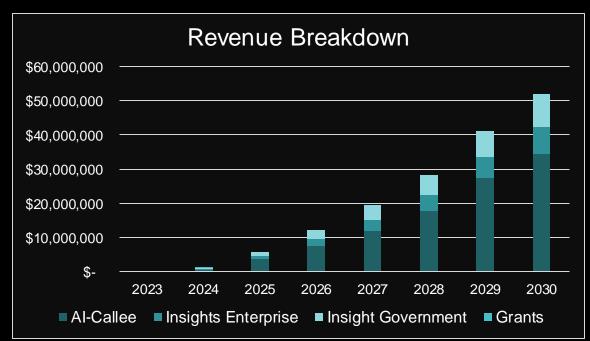
## Revenue Model

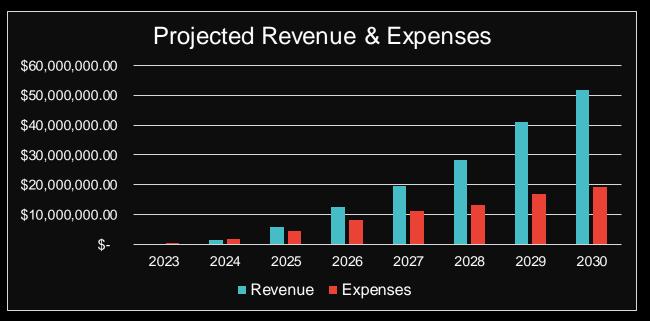
**Financial Forecast** 

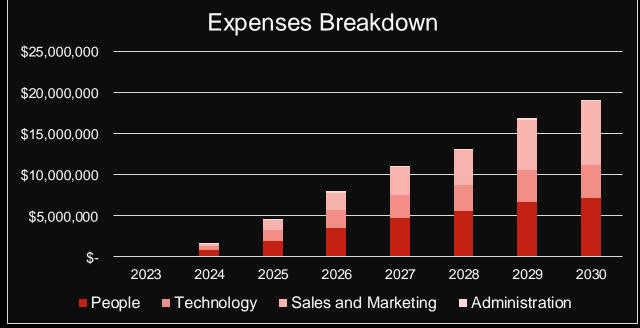
### **Neutral Case**

Projected revenue and expenses 2023-2030

Link to Financial Forecast

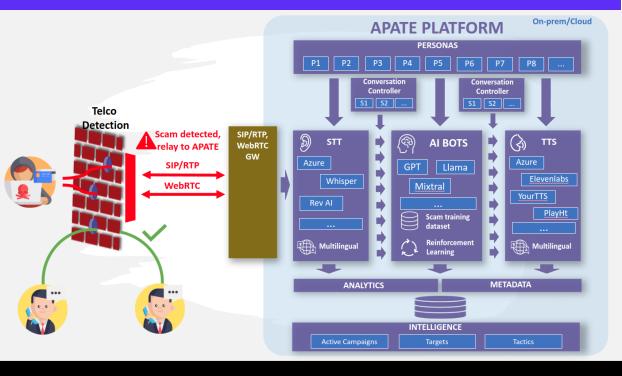


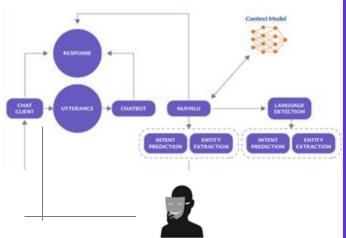




## DevOps Pipeline (SIP and WebRTC compliant)

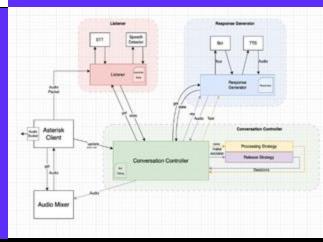






Embedded Shared Mental Models

Enhanced Conversation features



## The Technology

What we have built

#### **Configuration List**

Add Config

#### Doug Mitchell (Guy, Whisper)

Created: 2023-07-21 08:50:30 Modified: 2023-08-29 07:03:05

Uses: 73

Associated Numbers:

61255260572, 61256268069, 61256323099, 61258367092,

61260810093, 61264368015

Calls)

Uses: 13

Created: 2023-07-24 02:42:14

Modified: 2023-09-13 01:51:01

Associated Numbers:

61480096725

Bernard Stapien (Whisper, Merge

#### Bernard Stapien (Coqui, Whisper)

Created: 2023-07-25 03:12:48 Modified: 2023-09-20 00:59:54

Uses: 525

Associated Numbers:

\* (Default), 61291880650

Delete

### Doug Mitchell, Truck Driver (Coqui,

Delete

Created: 2023-08-02 02:13:33 Modified: 2023-08-29 07:11:12

Uses: 8

Associated Numbers:

61283535360, 61863655375

Delete

Bernard Stapien (Coqui, For Examples)

#### Arvind Mehta, Indian Entrepreneur

Created: 2023-08-17 01:11:21 Modified: 2023-08-24 07:39:56

Uses: 22

Associated Numbers:

61242110152, 61260611083, 61280465370, 61287552654, 61288454866

Delete

Jenny (Chat) with BB

Created: 2023-08-28 23:18:21

61243131806

Delete

Jessica Mitchell (Jenny Chat)

Created: 2023-08-29 07:06:19



**Configuration List** 

#### Elma Fisher (Coqui, For Examples)

Created: 2023-08-24 07:20:36 Modified: 2023-08-24 07:25:46

Uses: 2

Associated Numbers:



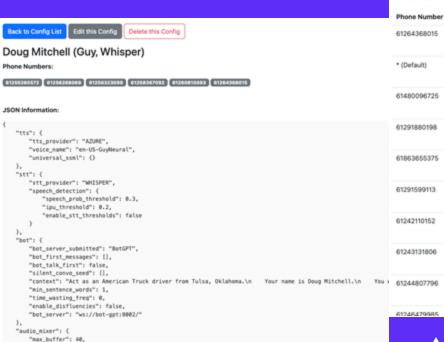
"background\_audio": "RANDOM", "background\_volume": 0.05, "bot\_volume": 1,

Delete this Config

"effects": "[]"

Back to Config List





#### Phone Number List

Back to Config List

Phone Number

#### Phone Numbers:

61264368015 link Config \* (Default) 61480096725 61291880198 61863655375 View Config Edit Config 61291599113 Jenny (Chat) with 88 nlink Config 61242110152

Config

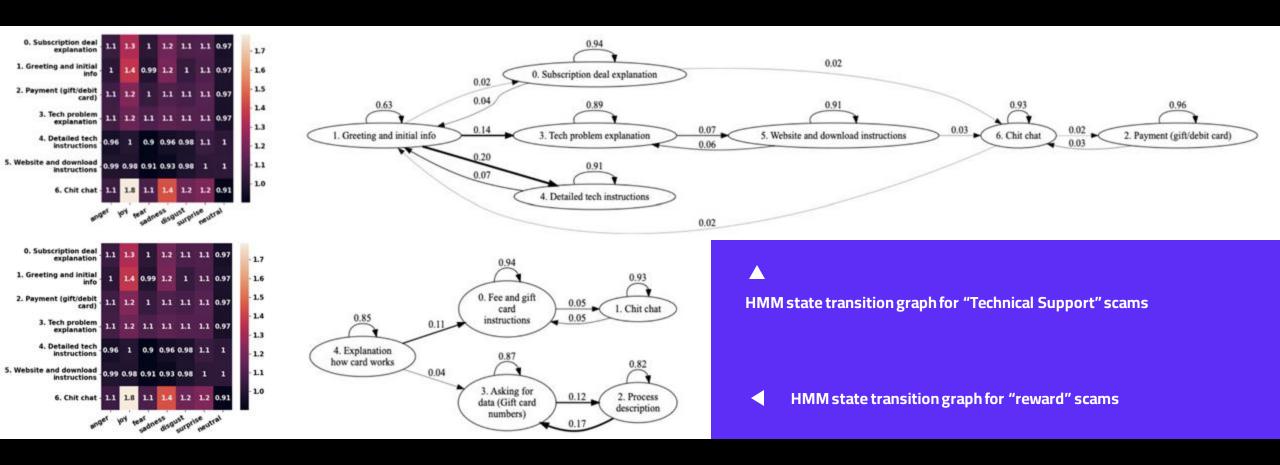
Bernard Stapien (Coqui, For Examples)

**Phone Number List** 

## Apate Personas

## Context and Scam Category Awareness

### **Scam Baiters Minded**



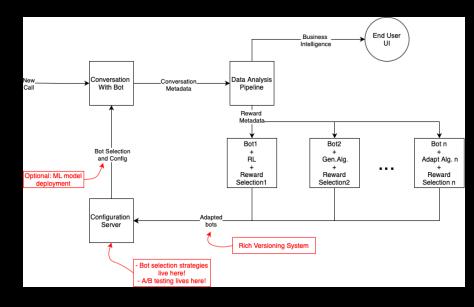
## **Embedded Shared Mental Models**

### The Technical Details

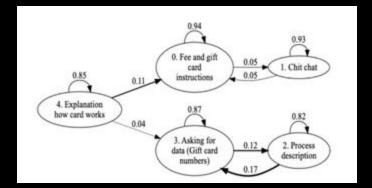
The Apate Bot is optimized for longer conversations.

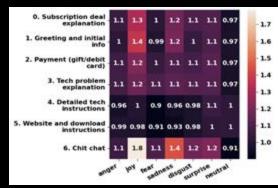
The **Context Model** is updated based on the success or failure of current strategies - using Reinforcement Learning.

During the conversation, the bot derives the intent of the scammer and reacts in a way to deceive them from reaching advanced stages of their scam script/plot.



### Probabilistic model for Reward Scams

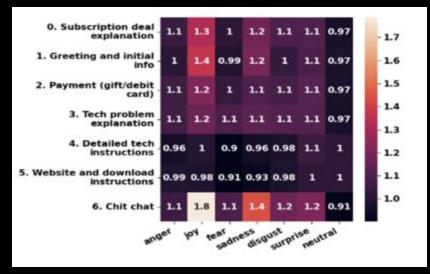


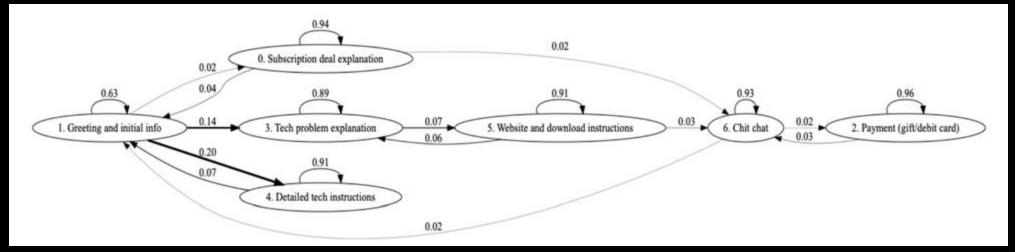


### Probabilistic Model for Technical Support Scams

### The Technical Details

Hidden Markov Models (HMM) are probabilistic models. These probabilistic models of scams allow us to infer conversation status from observed data. These transition graphs allow us to get inside the head of the scammers to bait them.



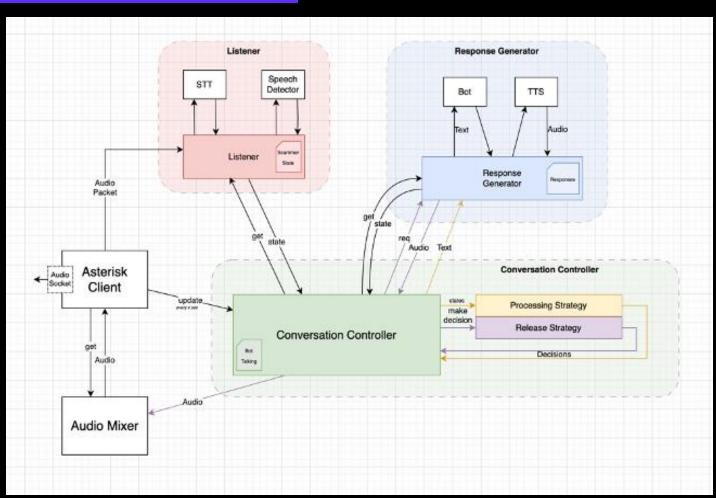


## **Enhanced Conversation Features**

The Technical Details

A **Conversation Controller** manages listening and talking. This includes enhanced conversational features to create a human-like voice, realistic interplay between interlocutors with injection of disfluencies, emotions, backchannelling and minimized speech delays.

The result? A flexible asynchronous conversation control architecture that intelligently manages turn taking and conversation based on a deep knowledge of scammer/victim conversation structure.



## Flexible & Infinitely Scalable

### The Technical Details

On-Prem or Cloud – containerized solution flexibly adapted depending on customer preference and data/intelligence acquisition requirements

Easy to integrate with existing in-house offerings – we can customize voices, bot personas, speech recognition and incorporate a wide-range of existing in-house LLMs and trained AI models.

DevOps Pipeline - SIP and WebRTC compliant

