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SIMmetry

A recent Secret Service raid uncovers an insane network of SIM cards—along with perhaps the most unusual piece of hardware I’ve ever seen. Here’s the deal with the SIM bank.

By Ernie Smith · September 23, 2025

*#sim cards #telecom #sim banks #sim hardware #telecom hardware
#niche hardware #sms spam #texting spam*

When I learned that the Secret Service had taken down a giant “SIM farm” in the NYC area, I immediately had two thoughts: One, “Wow, that sounds like the reason we all get so many scam calls.” And two, “Holy crap, what is *that* weird-ass piece of hardware?!!?!?!?!?!?!?!?!?”

You must understand, dear reader, the bizarre gear they were using. I’ve never seen anything like it before.



A sample of some of the many SIM banks found throughout the NYC area recently, per the Secret Service.

Much will be written about the threat to the telecom system, which is the angle the Secret Service is taking, as it was uncovered right around the time of a United Nations General Assembly meeting. I want to know the deal with the hardware itself.

You know the old board game Guess Who? You know, with the cards that stick up, and the other player has to guess what faces you have? Imagine that times 100, but with the cards a 20th of the size of the Guess Who cards, and add a whole freaking ton of antennas into the mix, and you have this crazy-ass device, the niche-iest of niche electronic devices. Each device holds numerous SIM cards, which means that someone had to pop out thousands of SIMs to put in these boxes, presumably one at a time.

Fortunately for us, the U.S. Secret Service gave us a picture of that insanity, too:



Did the people who put this network together take turns removing all the SIMs from the cards and putting them into the boxes?

So basically, we have a device that is intended to hold literal hundreds of SIM cards, and apparently the people who ran this network had literal racks of these machines. They have this almost magical sense of symmetry to them, which

makes them highly attractive to nerds like me. It reminds me of [Aereo](#), the noble ([but failed](#)) attempt to use thousands of tiny antennas to capture broadcast television signals to resell online.

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If you find weird or unusual topics like this super-fascinating, the best way to tell us is to **[give us a nod on Ko-Fi](#)**. It helps ensure that we can keep this machine moving, support outside writers, and bring on the tools to support our writing. (Also it's heartening when someone chips in.)

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So, what the heck is this thing, why did they have so many of them, and how come you've never seen them before?

The short answer: It's a device called a "SIMbank" or "SIM gateway," often attached to a "SIM pool," which gives all those SIM cards access to a cellular network.

The longer answer: The devices in the Secret Service photo, apparently made by a Chinese company called [Ejoin Technology](#), are used in VoIP settings to handle lots of SIM cards. Ejoin says they produce the devices for what it calls "SMS and voice gateway solutions." In other words, these boxes made it possible to mass-

text and mass-call people. They are not cheap devices, costing in the thousands of dollars. And that's before you get in the business of purchasing all those SIM cards.

The exact devices that the Secret Service found are sold by Ejoin for an eye-watering \$3,730. Here's a press image of one:

Something tells me they don't sell this on Amazon.

With devices like these, you can text someone at one number and immediately switch to another using the same cellular line, as if you changed area codes on the fly. Which sounds great for marketing, but also great for spam, and even better for harassment.

(It should be noted that Ejoin is not alone in selling these. I also spotted them being sold by Etross Telecom, OpenVox, and China Skyline Telecom. These are

defiantly obscure but presumably have a use case.)

If you think these devices seem sketchy, apparently Alibaba does as well. If you look up messages on Alibaba for Ejoin Technology's products, you get a generic logo, and this message that appears:

Due to the website's compliance with specific regulations or policies in China, product information is no longer publicly displayed, but purchasing or payment operations can still be carried out. If you require detailed product information or link, please contact the sales department OR move to Ejointech official Website.

So, if you buy these objects via Alibaba, you are literally buying a \$3,700 device from a black box. On the plus side, going to Ejoin's website, you can actually see screenshots of the tech in action:

The kind of interface that people who hate SMS junk messages love to hate.

In this context, these are basically spam machines, and whoever ran this network—whether a state actor or a criminal scheme—had dozens of them, each costing the price of a high-end laptop. The SIM cards themselves probably cost like \$5-\$10 a piece, maybe more, which means that just filling them up with cards likely cost thousands more. Plus, there's the manual labor of it all. 256 SIM cards don't put themselves into a SIMbank.

(Side note: When I searched for information on how to buy bulk SIM cards, one of the first sites that came up was a black-hat hacking forum in which a user asked the very same question. Which, to my friends in the black-hat hacking world, hello.)

Now, to be clear, there are some legitimate reasons for users to have them, particularly for testing and quality assurance across networks. (Say, if you're concerned that your app might work differently on Verizon than it might on AT&T or T-Mobile, or if you're doing a lot of edge computing. Perhaps a legitimate VoIP company has a few for whatever reason.) And [I did find a user on Medium](#) who posted why they built a SIM bank solution for their marketing team. But illegitimate use cases appear to dwarf the legitimate ones, at least in terms of public attention.

The case in New York is far from unique. Earlier this year, [Interpol broke up a SIM bank fraud scheme](#) in South Africa that involved 40 people and more than 1,000 cards. The cards were used to reroute international traffic as local traffic to make the calls look legitimate. And a [spate of cases](#) both targeting and [based](#) in India have emerged in recent months.

(By the way, if you find this topic interesting, you might want to check out the Indian cybersecurity news outlet *The 420*, [which appears to be on top of this](#).)

Beyond the sheer scope of SIM cards that the network had, the fact that the Secret Service uncovered the network around New York City is perhaps the most interesting part. It suggests that we might see more tricks like this in the future.

Anyway, if you see one of these boxes lying around somewhere, filled to the brim with SIMs, odds are you might be in the vicinity of something sketchy. (One has to wonder if the rise of eSIMs is designed to make these products obsolete.)

As criminal as they might be depending on the situation, they admittedly look cool.

SIMless Links

RIP Billy Hudson, a co-host of the popular YouTube channel *The Game Chasers*. He meant a lot to the retro gaming community, and went out amid some very serious health issues. A telling thing about Hudson is that the last video he posted before he died, created immediately after undergoing brain surgery, involved him advising his followers not to fall for crowdfunding scams. He didn't have to do that; nobody would have blamed him. Yet he did.

If you've never seen this piece of found media, you're in for a treat. [It's a video of Elliott Smith performing on *Breakfast Time*](#), a bizarre morning show hosted on the original iteration of the FX network. (As the video notes, it was a performance from well before Smith was famous.) After getting peppered with numerous demeaning questions by co-host Tom Bergeron (later of *Dancing With The Stars* fame), Smith pulls off a performance of "Clementine" that silences the room and presumably made Bergeron rethink his life choices. Oh, there's a freaking puppet behind him as he's playing.

I don't know why the German gummy-makers Haribo are making some of the best power banks on the market, but apparently they are—and [serious backpackers love them](#).

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Find this one an interesting read? [Share it with a pal](#)! And to anyone with one of these devices: Please don't spam me, thanks.

Your time was wasted by ... Ernie Smith

Ernie Smith is the editor of Tedium, and an active internet snarker. Between his many internet side projects, he finds time to hang out with his wife Cat, who's funnier than he is.



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