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## PHP Find a 15 or 16-digit number in a long string

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I am working on a function to sanitize credit card data by replacing all digits except the last 4 with X's. the problem is that I have a lot of data already stored in the database as json objects. each record may or may not have a card number somewhere in it, and they occur in different places in the text from record to record (sometimes at the very end, sometimes in the middle, etc.) Looking for a way to extract all 15-digit or 16-digit numbers from the string so that I can pass this number to the sanitize function.

[php](#) [regex](#) [sanitization](#)

asked Mar 24 at 17:35

 [user2994560](#)  
5 2

1 JSON strings or JSON objects? If they're stored as JSON strings, then the best solution would be to decode them into an array and then do the processing. – [Amal Murali](#) Mar 24 at 17:39

If the data is already in JSON, treat it as JSON and note a plain string . . . – [ernie](#) Mar 24 at 17:41

2 "each record may or may not have a card number somewhere in it". Ouch! I hope that you are doing this to *quickly* come into PCI-DSS compliance before you're heavily fined for data security violations. Plain text credit card numbers must never be stored, and there are regulations about how they must be split up and/or encrypted (as well as all sorts of logical and physical access controls to the data). Good luck! – [Phil Perry](#) Mar 24 at 18:31

### 3 Answers

Looking for a way to extract all 15-digit or 16-digit numbers from the string

You can use:

```
\b[0-9]{15,16}\b
```

answered Mar 24 at 17:39

 [anubhava](#)  
148k 16 56 111

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If it is stored as a json object in the DB and you want to find an attribute in the object you'll want to use [json\\_decode\(\)](#) to take the record and make it a php Stdclass.

so if the json record looks like this:

```
$record = "{ 'name' : 'theSpurg', 'cc_num' : '139764518623' }"
```

You can access it like this

```
$test = json_decode($record);
$credi_num = $test->cc_num;
```

if that's not what you're looking for then I am misunderstanding the situation. Cheers

edited Mar 24 at 18:17

answered Mar 24 at 17:40



TheSpurg  
104 7

In PHP You can use like this:

```
<?php
$subject="aa9999999999999999aa8888888888888888as555555ssd555fs22aa999999999999999a";//You
preg_match_all('/(?:[0-9]{15,16})+/s', $subject, $result, PREG_PATTERN_ORDER);
$result = $result[0];

print_r($result);//Printing result
```

**output:**

```
Array ( [0] => 9999999999999999 [1] => 8888888888888888 [2] => 9999999999999999 )
```

if you want only one and first number then you can use this instead:

```
if (preg_match('/([0-9]{15,16})/s', $subject, $regs)) {
    $result = $regs[0];
} else {
    $result = "";
}
```

answered Mar 24 at 18:07



user3452098  
53 5

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