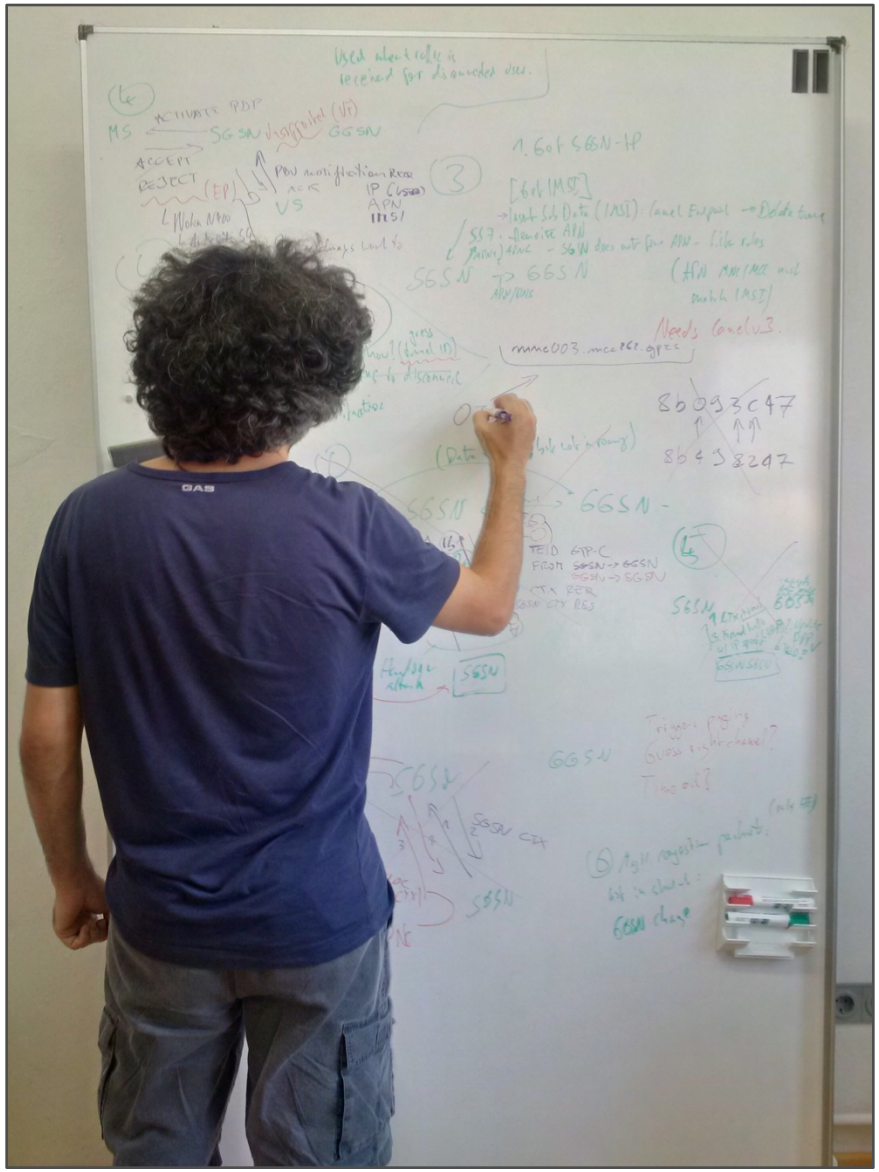
Advanced interconnect attacks
Chasing GRX and SS7 vulns

Karsten Nohl <nohl@srlabs.de>
Luca Melette <luca@srlabs.de>

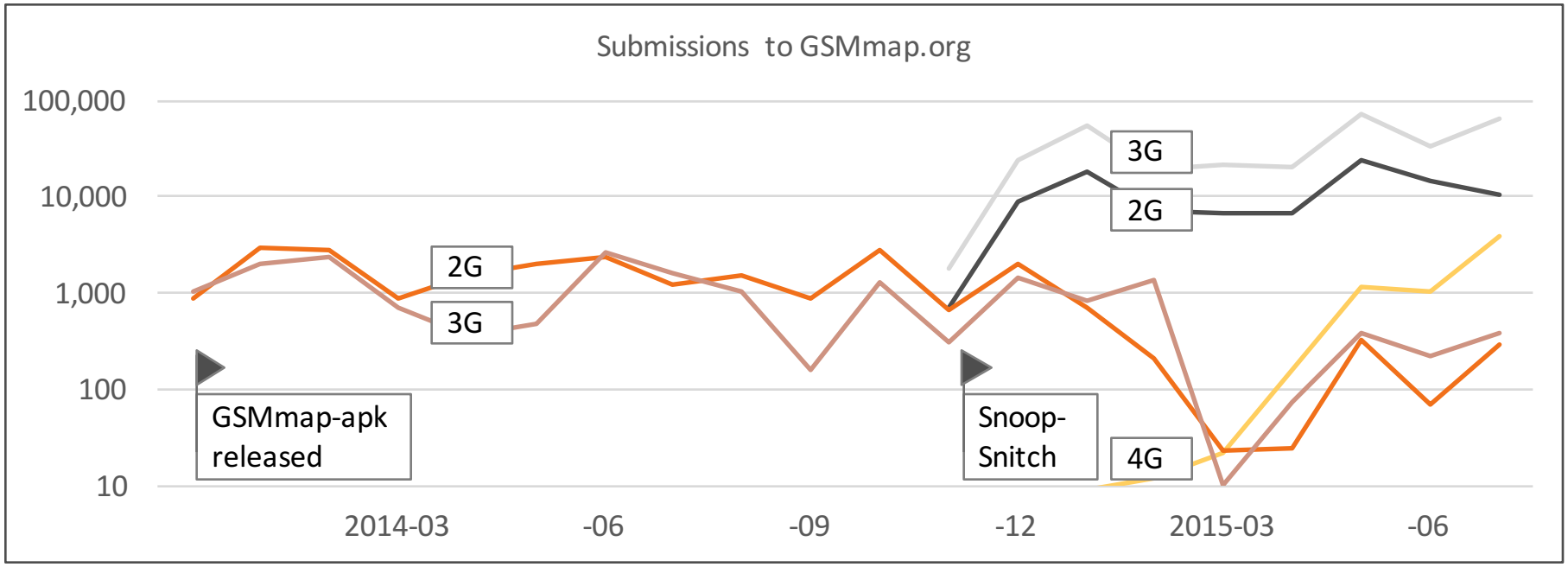
SECURITY RESEARCH LABS

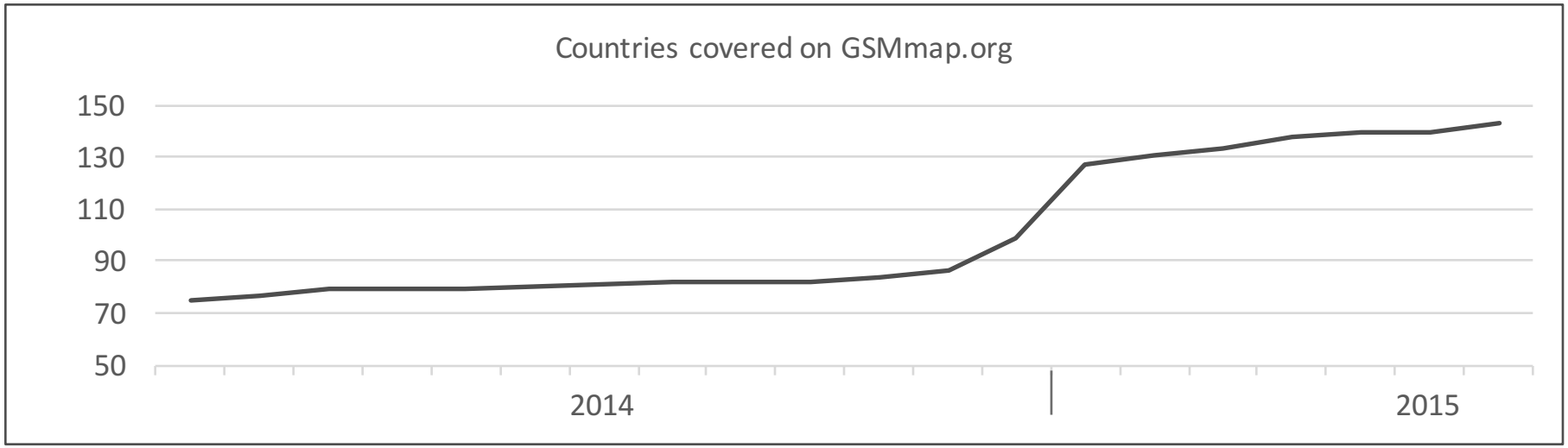
Agenda



- **IMSI catcher catching**
- GRX attack potential
- GRX exposure
- Research outlook

Thank **you** so much for growing GSMmap!





SnoopSnitch catcher detection analyzes a cell's config and behavior

SnoopSnitch combines three types of IMSI catcher heuristics

A Suspicious cell **configuration**

- No proper neighbors
- Out-of-place location area
- High cell reselect offset, low registration timer
- Large number of paging groups

B Suspicious cell **behavior**

- IMSI+IMEI requests during location update
- Immediate reject after identity request
- Paging without transaction
- Orphaned traffic channel

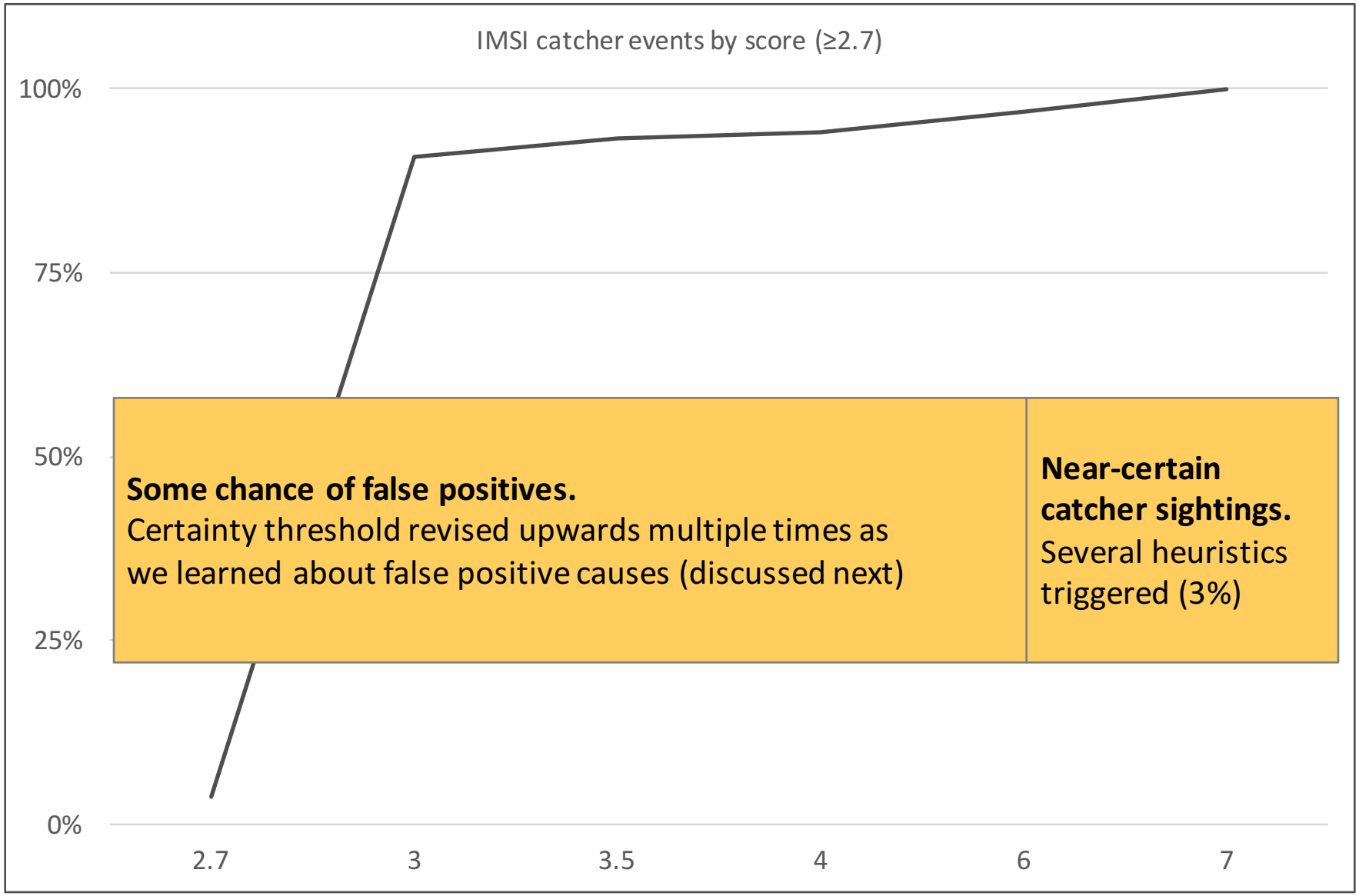
C Lack of proper **encryption**

- No encryption -or-
- Downgrade to crackable A5/1 or A5/2
- Delayed *Cipher Mode Complete* (due to A5/1 cracking time)

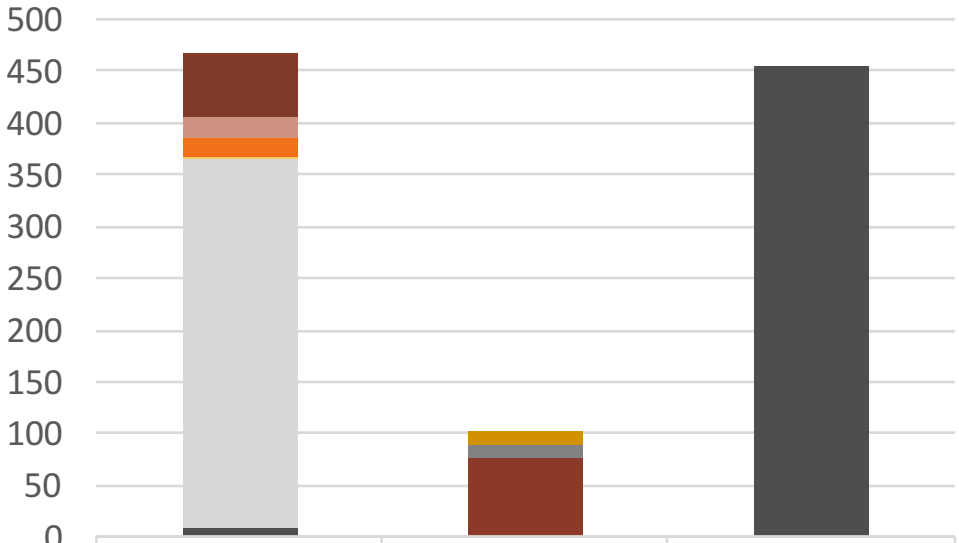
SnoopSnitch assigns a score to each heuristic[1] and sums scores to form catcher events

1 Metric details: opensource.srlabs.de/projects/snoopsnitch/wiki/IMSI_Catcher_Score

Majority of IMSI catcher sightings has medium score



Many heuristics trigger regularly



	A Config	B Behavior	C Encryption
Encryption downgrade [C1]			454
Silent call [T4]		12	
Paging w/o transaction [T3]		13	
ID requests during LU [C4]		77	
Inconsistent neighbors [R1]	60		
Low registration timer [T1]	21		
High reselect offset [K2]	19		
No neighbors [K1]	2		
Lonesome LAC [A5]	356		
Inconsistent LAC [A2]	9		

A IMSI catcher detection pitfalls (1/3)

Suspicious cell configuration

- No proper neighbors
- Lonesome location area
- Out-of-place location area

False positive causes

1. Networks often change abruptly; e.g. when entering the subway
2. SnoopSnitch cannot directly read the radio channel (ARFCN) from the baseband. In the few cases its heuristic guesses wrong, an IMSI catcher event is reported

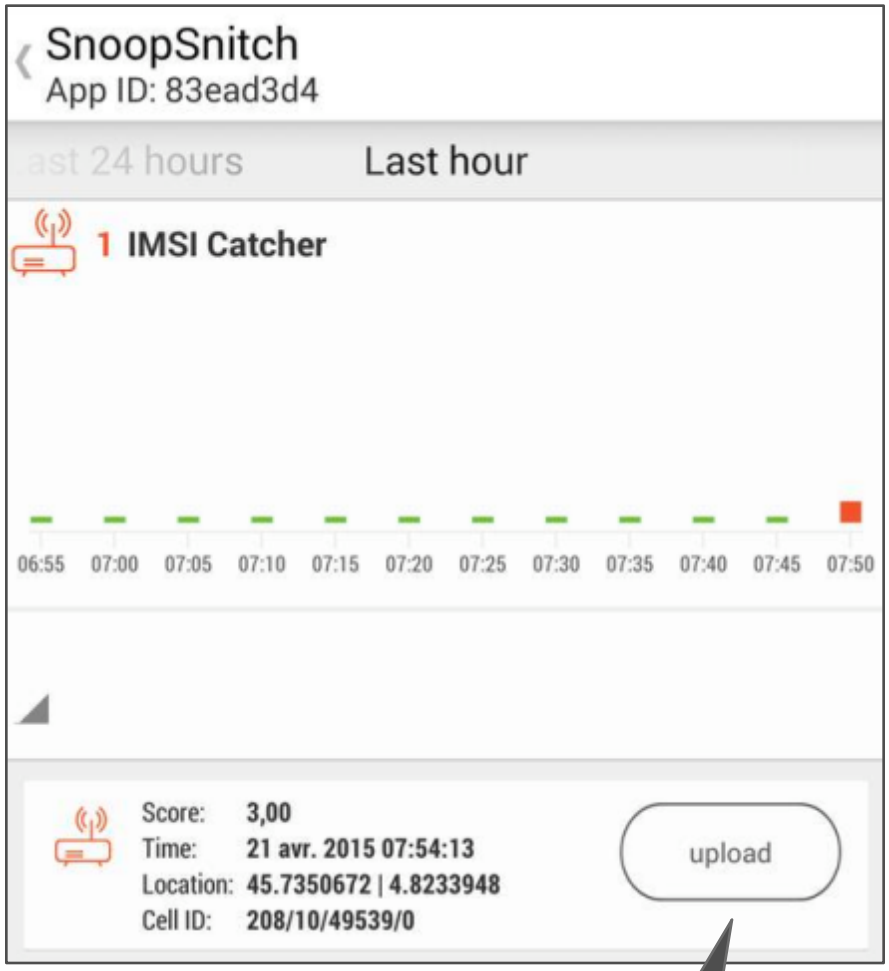
B IMSI catcher detection pitfalls (2/3)

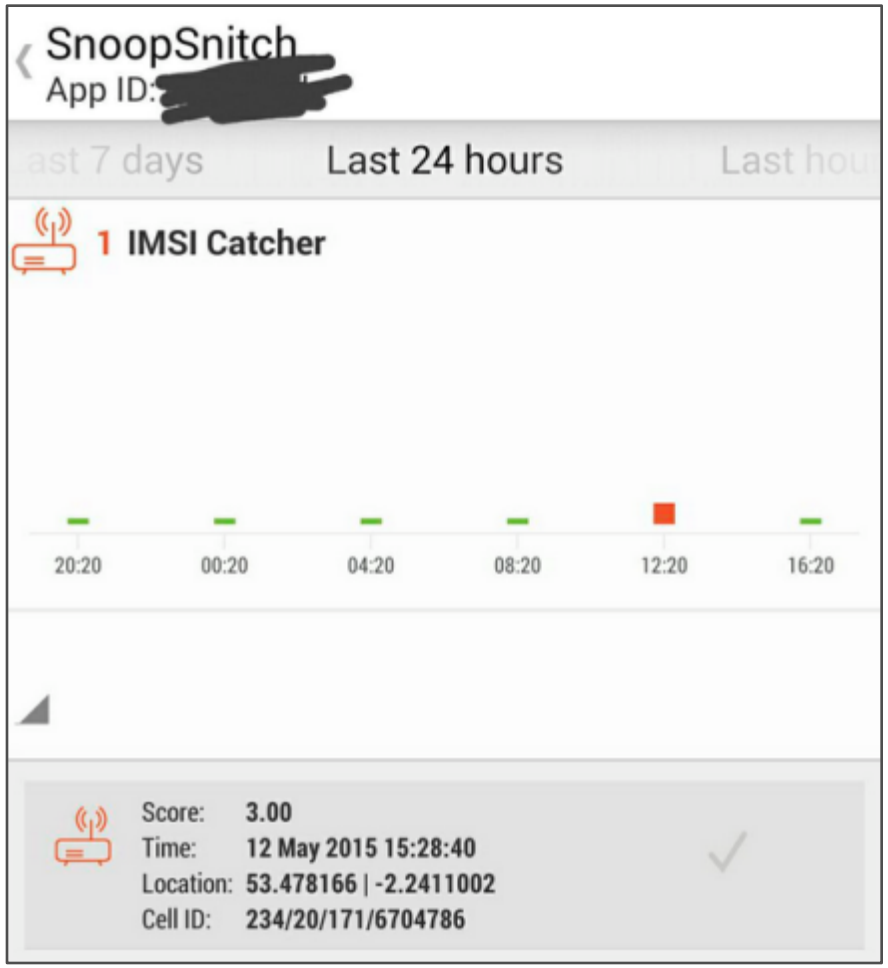
Suspicious cell **behaviour**	▪ IMSI + IMEI requests during location update ▪ Immediate reject
False positive causes	▪ Femto cells behave very similar to IMSI catchers: a. Query IMSI + IMEI (for whitelisting) b. Reject all but their owner's phones c. Implement radio protocols somewhat incomplete d. Use hardware similar to small IMSI catchers

C IMSI catcher detection pitfalls (3/3)

Lack of proper **encryption**	▪ No encryption -or- ▪ Downgrade to A5/1
False positive causes	1. Some networks alternate between ciphers! For example, E-Plus Germany: A5/3 /3 /1 /3 /3 /1 /3 2. Can IMSI catchers really not use A5/3 and other strong crypto? We are about to find out!

Spot the difference: Not all catcher events are being uploaded



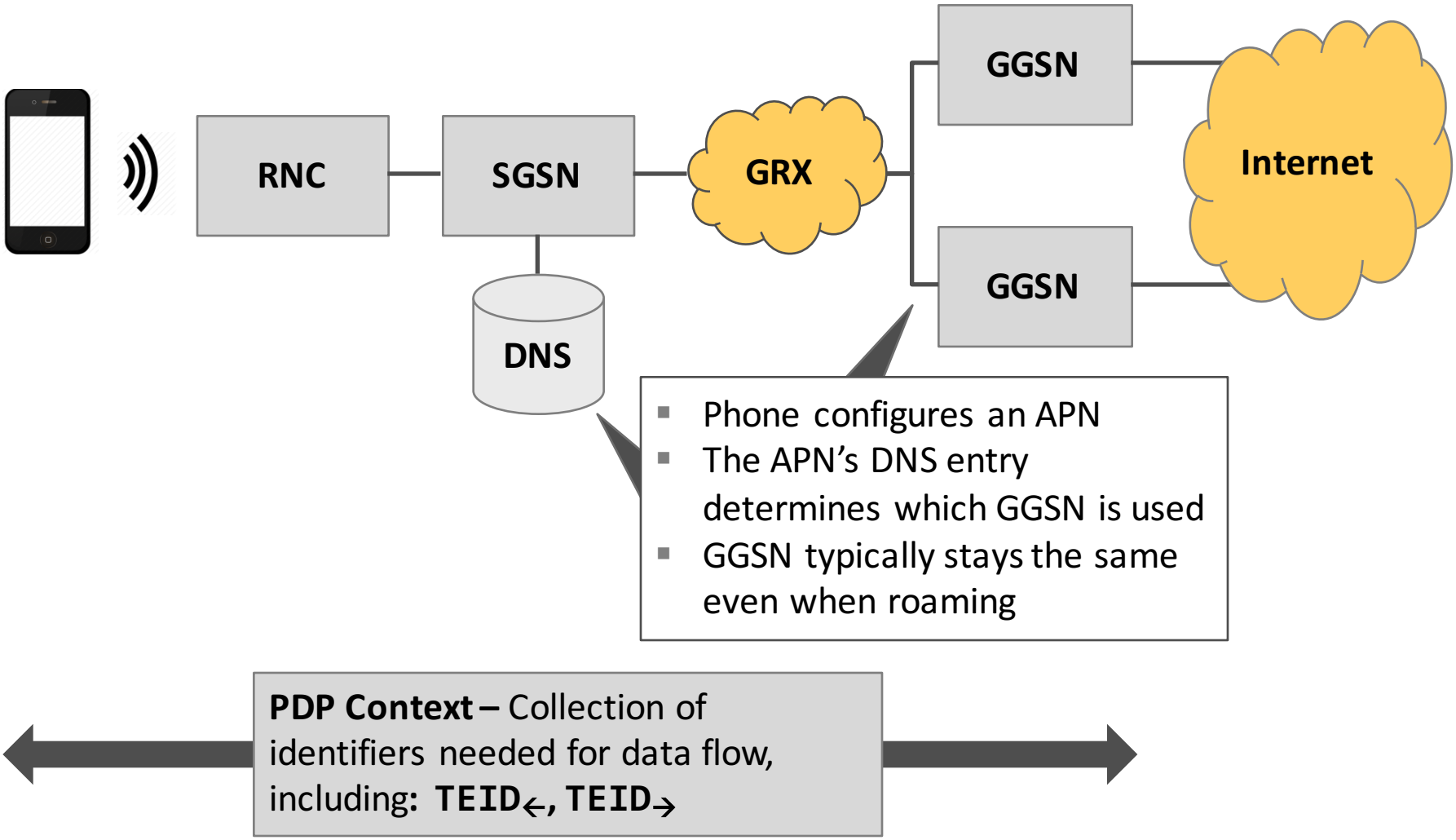


Posted to Twitter but not uploaded for further analysis

Agenda

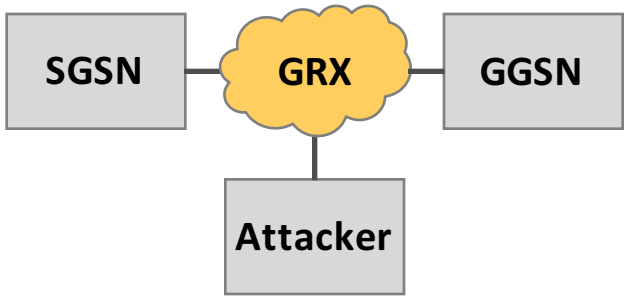
- IMSI catcher catching
- **GRX attack potential**
- GRX exposure
- Research outlook

The GRX network connects nodes along the Internet access path of mobile phones



Can attackers abuse GRX for data intercept?

Research question: What can attackers do on GRX?



DoS	✓ -> P1Sec @ HITB
Fraud	✓
MITM	?
Local intercept	? Focus of this talk
Hijacking	?

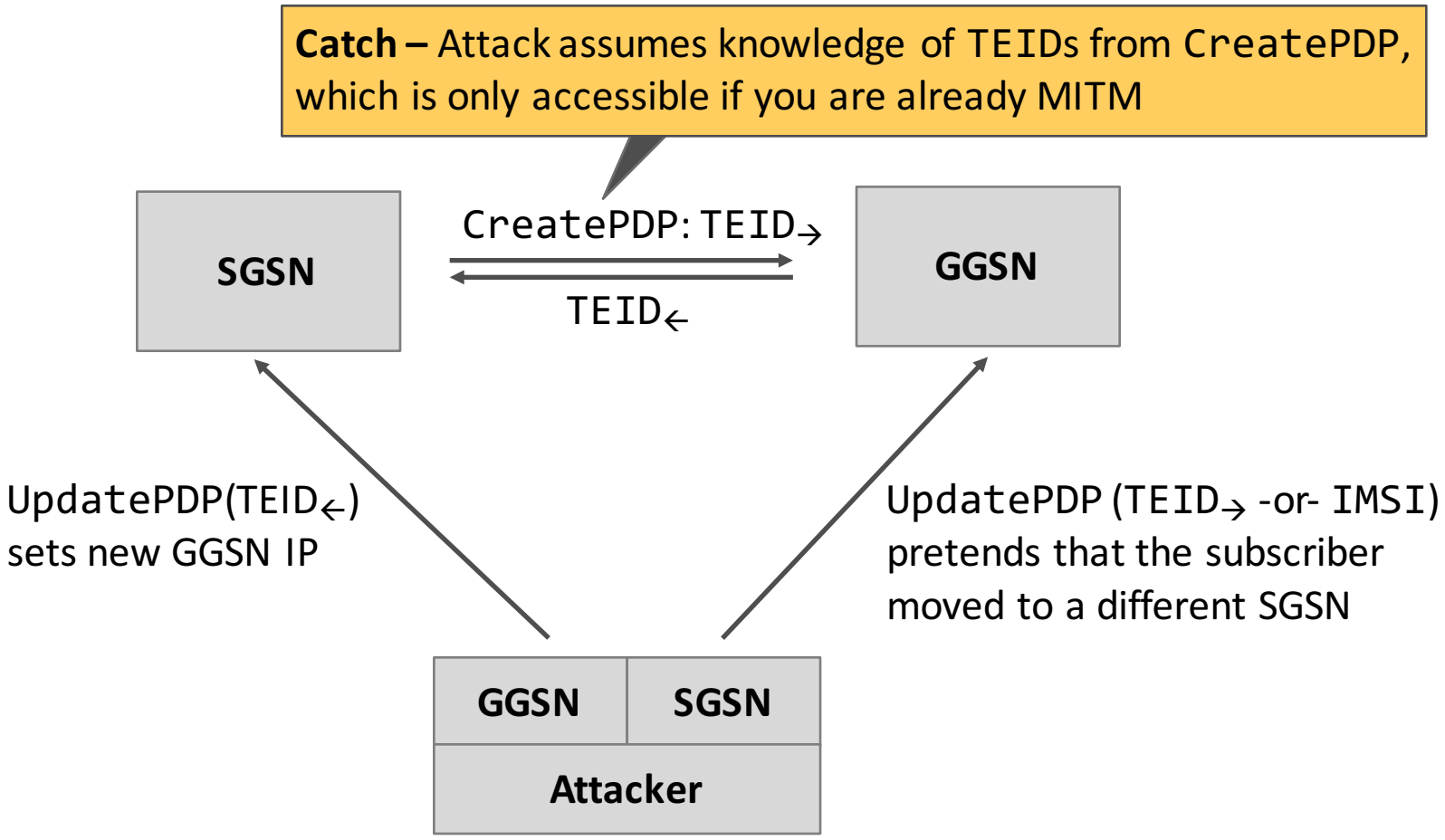
Prerequisites: SGSN reachability and IMSI

Attacker needs –

1. GRX connectivity? Not always! (discussed herein)
2. IP of current SGSN. Query through:
   a. `SRI-GPRS` over SS7
   b. `SRI-GPRS` over GRX
   c. Send `SGSN-ContextRequest` to all possible SGSNs; one will respond
3. Subscriber IMSI. Several methods exist for IMSI extraction
   a. Various SS7 / HLR queries
   b. IMSI catching
   c. Passive sniffing
   d. Guessing from IMSI range (non-targeted)

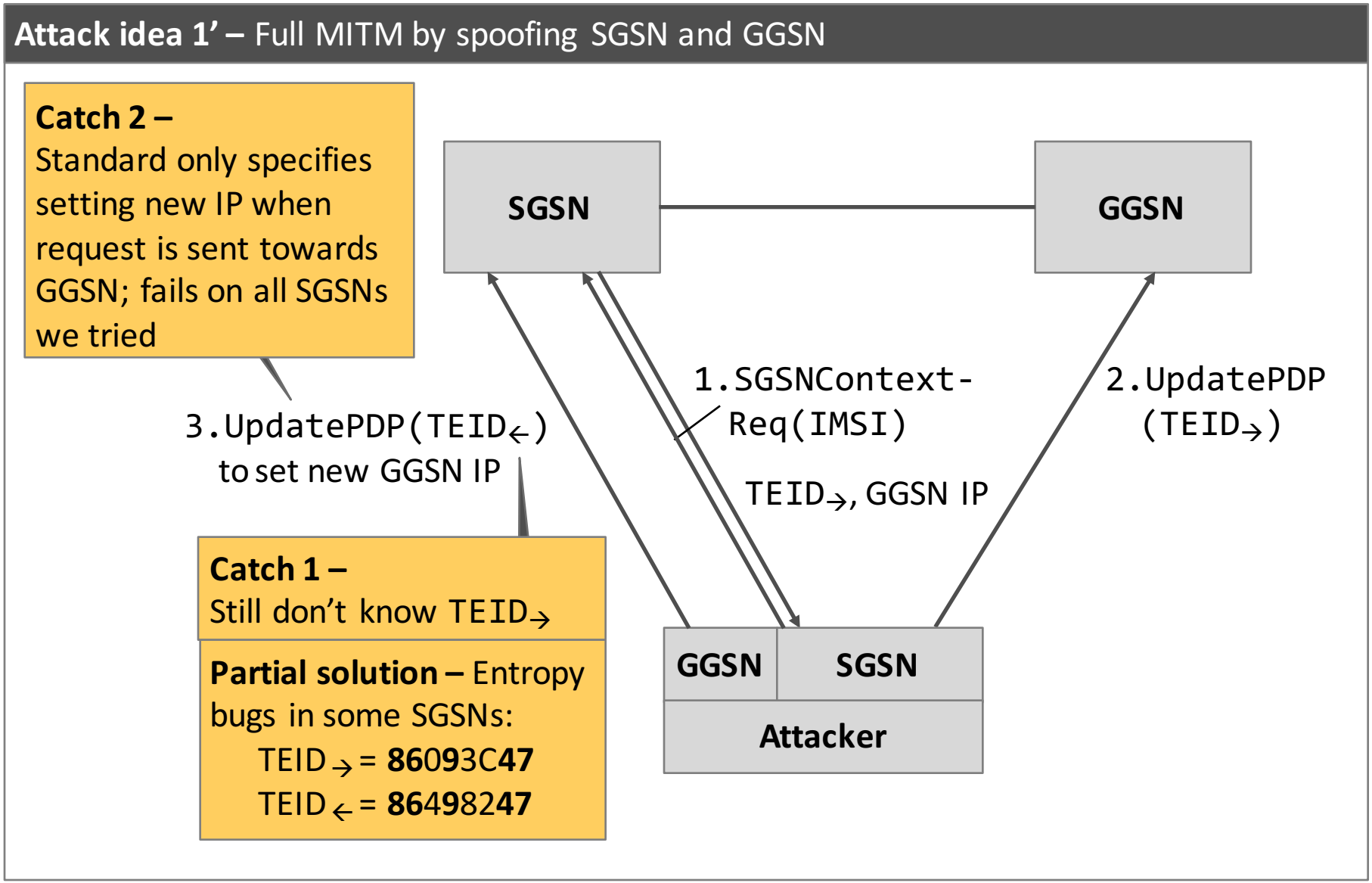
Simple GRX attack ideas face challenges

Attack idea 1 – Full MITM by spoofing SGSN and GGSN



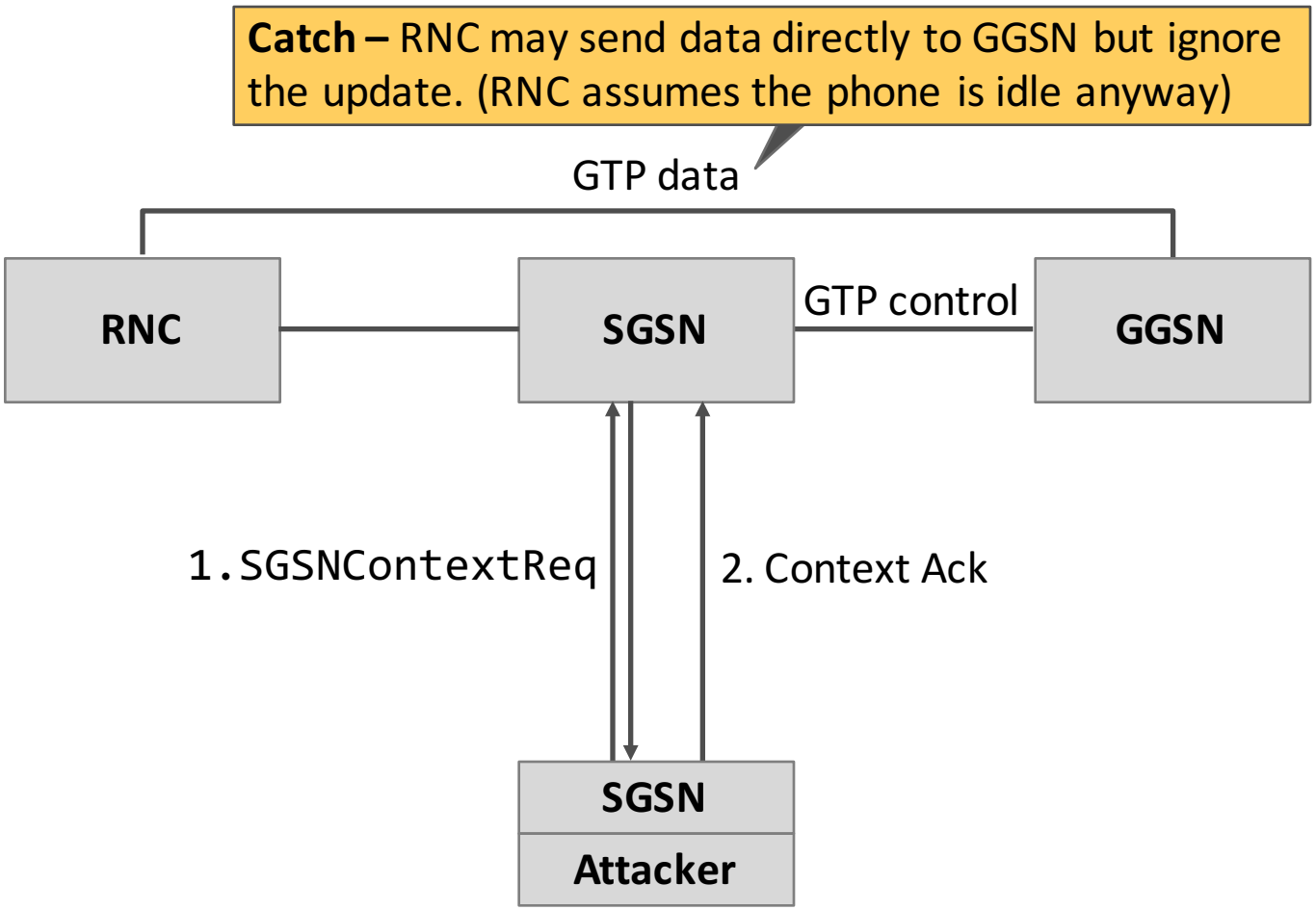
Attack variant encounters further road blocks

Attack idea 1' – Full MITM by spoofing SGSN and GGSN



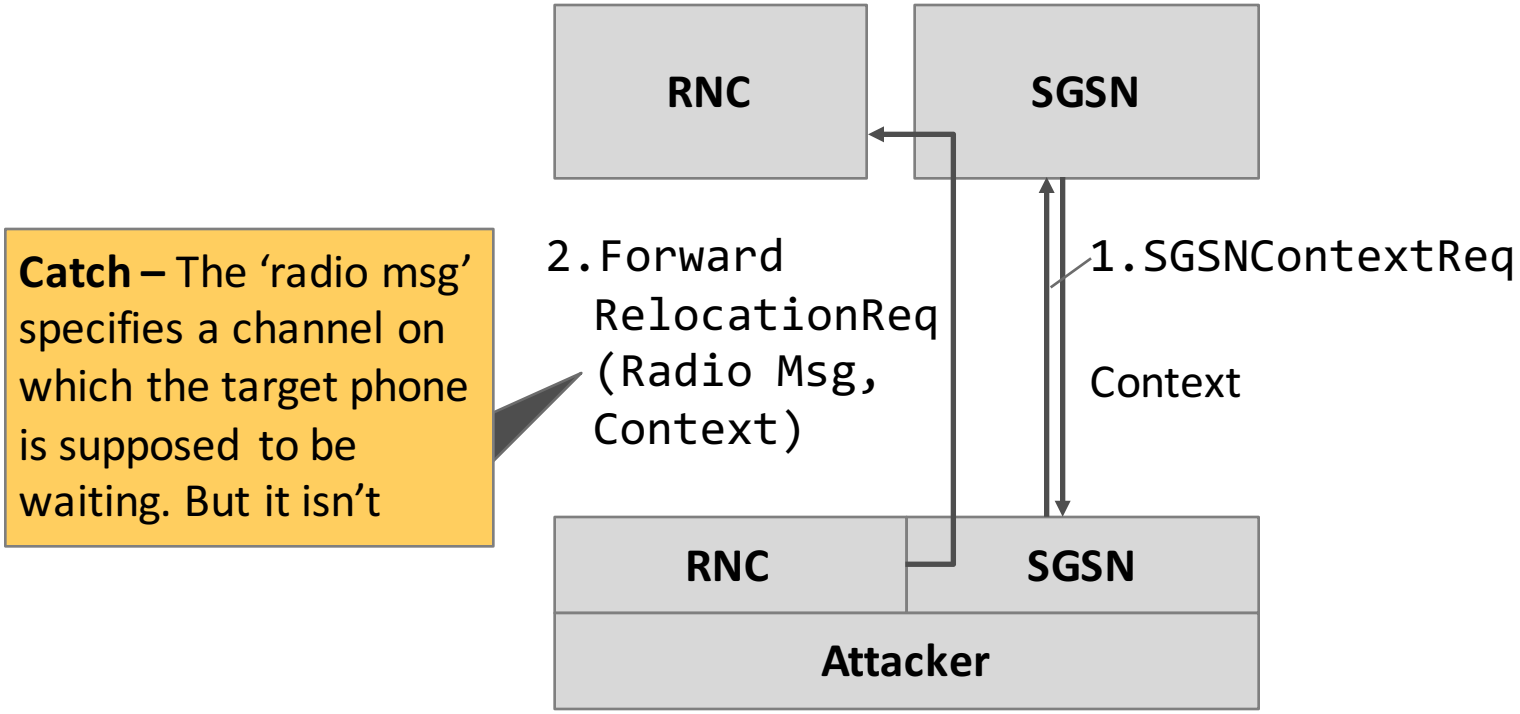
Simple handover attempts fail (1/2)

Attack idea 2 – Abuse handover (target-initiated)



Simple handover attempts fail (2/2)

Attack idea 3 – Abuse handover (serving-initiated)



Catch – The 'radio msg' specifies a channel on which the target phone is supposed to be waiting. But it isn't

Forced connection establishment fails for current phones

Attack idea 4 – Abuse network-initiated connection establishment

2. ActivatePDP

3. Accept

Catch – The phone must be registered to the network but with no data connection established. Since newer phones always try to maintain a data connection, they seem to not support this mechanism, and reject

SGSN

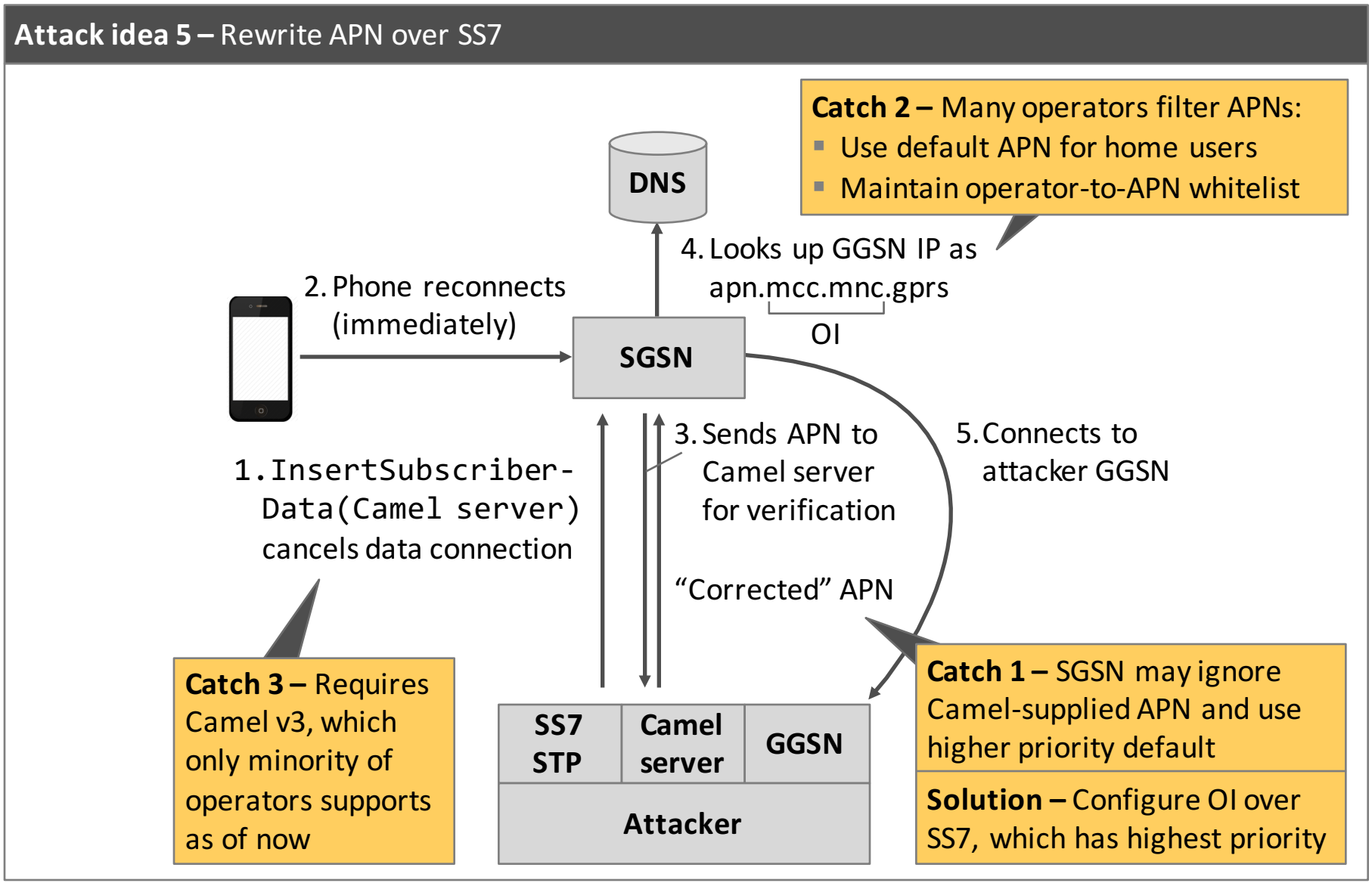
1. PDUNotificationReq (IMSI, APN, IP)
This message is used when data is received for a non-connected phone. It establishes a new connection

GGSN

Attacker

APN replacement is often prevented through whitelists

Attack idea 5 – Rewrite APN over SS7



Attack 1: Fully-encrypting voice+data IMSI catcher

Demo

Catch IMSI

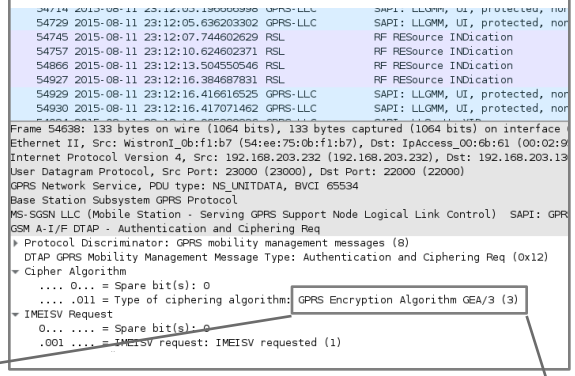
- NanoBTS or any other small cell

Request auth/encryption keys over GRX or SS7

- GRX: `SGSNContextReq`
- SS7: `SendAuthInfo` or `SendIdentification`
- Usually possible over GRX or SS7 connection
- Also possible over the Internet? (next chapter)

Offer encrypted voice and data service

- Passes mutual auth
- 2G Voice: A5/3
- 2G Data: GEA/3
- 3G: UEA/1 & UIA/1

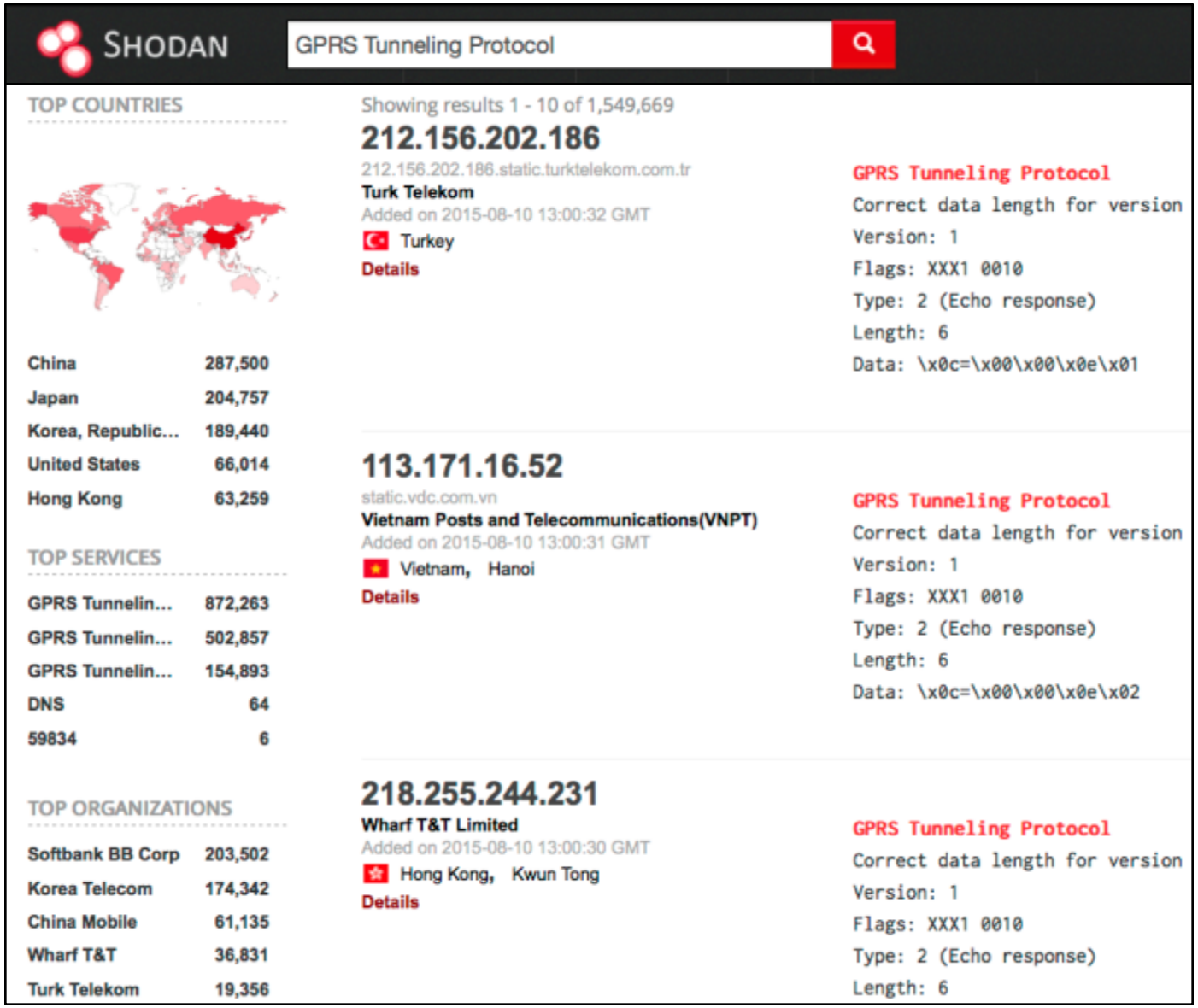


GPRS Encryption Algorithm GEA/3 (3)

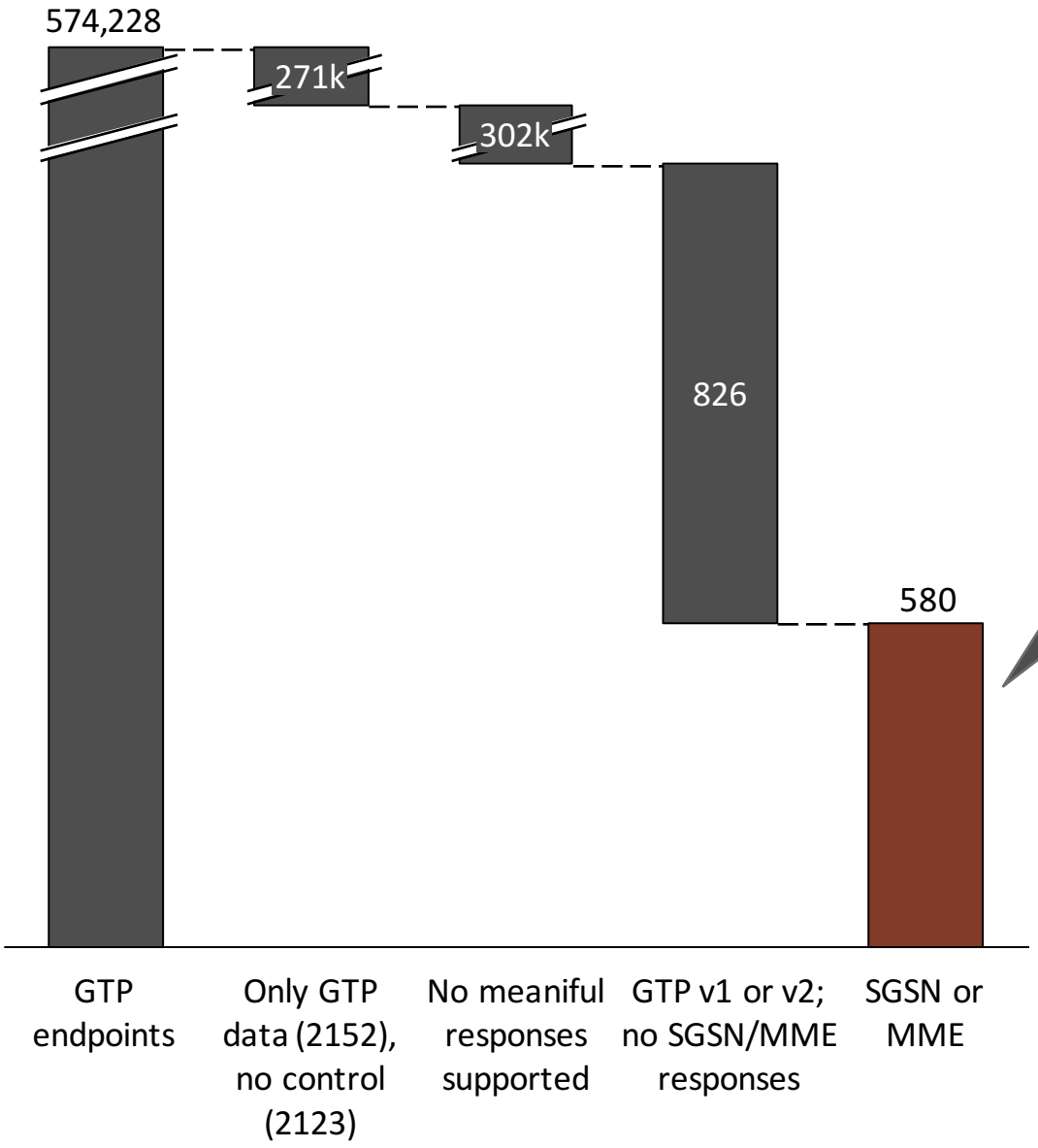
Agenda

- IMSI catcher catching
- GRX attack potential
- **GRX exposure**
- Research outlook

GTP is highly exposed on the Internet



A small but significant number of exposed GTP endpoints are SGSNs



Brazil	267
Tim	267
China	153
China Mobile	76
Guangdong Mobile	65
Shanghai Mobile	12
Korea	58
SK Telecom	54
Korea Telecom	4
Colombia	47
Colombia Móvil	47
USA	10
NewCore Wireless	8
Union Cell	1
Globecomm	1

+ Angola, Congo, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guam, India, Kuwait, Laos, Madagascar, Mexico, Malaysia, Romania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Chad, Tanzania, Vietnam

+ Many more SGSN/MME are reachable from an operator's customer IP segment

Exposed SGSNs talk to anybody on the Internet

```
root@scan:~# ./sgsn_probe.sh 211.234.233.0/24 220.103.193.0/24

Target list: 508 host(s)
Starting GTP Echo scan on port 2123... done.
Starting GTP Echo scan on port 2152... done.
Got 190 responses
Sending SGSN probe payload... done.
Got 54 responses
Saving to sgsn_ok.iplist

root@scan:~# ./get_context.sh 450050417xxxxxx sgsn_ok.iplist

Starting tshark on eth1
Sending SGSN context request to 54 host(s)
Response filtering (gtp.cause == 128)
Verbose context dump:
        Ciphering key CK: baf49a66103709848f823a20d9xxxxxx
        Integrity key IK: 15d743e469e2e2ef64e63bf8d4xxxxxx
        PDP type: IPv4 (33)
        PDP address length: 4
        PDP address: 10.63.150.161 (10.63.150.161)
        GGSN address length: 4
        GGSN Address for control plane: 172.28.29.116 (172.28.29.116)
        GGSN 2 address length: 4
        GGSN 2 address: 172.28.29.116 (172.28.29.116)
        APN length: 37
        APN: web.sktelecom.com.mnc005.mcc450.gprs
```

SGSNs disclose current encryption key on the Internet!

Attack 2: Passive data intercept

Capture bursts

- NanoBTS or any other small cell

2G

2G & 3G

Layer 2 parsing

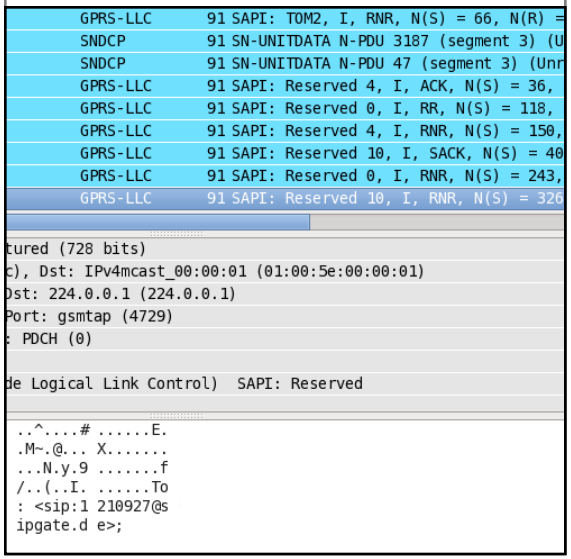
- GPRSdecode: srlabs.de/gprs

Query current key

- GRX: SGSNContextReq
- Or even over the Internet!

Layer 3 parsing

Wireshark:



Attack 3: Hijacking data connections

Demo

Get subscriber context	Spoof SGSN handover	Misuse subscriber IP
▪ GRX: SGSNContextReq	▪ GRX: UpdatePDP	Main attack: **Gain access –**

Protocol	Length	
GTP <DNS>	203	0xb056 CNAME api.weather.com.edgekey.netCNAME e7971.g.akamaiedge.net
GTP <DNS>	210	0xfb88 CNAME appleweather-cache.internal.query.g03.yahoodns.netA 98.
GTP <DNS>	214	0x7d25 CNAME www.apple.com.edgekey.netCNAME e3191.dscc.akamaiedge.ne
GTP <DNS>	203	0xb056 CNAME api.weather.com.edgekey.netCNAME e7971.g.akamaiedge.net
GTP <DNS>	210	0xfb88 CNAME appleweather-cache.internal.query.g03.yahoodns.netA 98.
GTP <DNS>	214	0x7d25 CNAME www.apple.com.edgekey.netCNAME e3191.dscc.akamaiedge.ne
GTP <DNS>	203	0xb056 CNAME api.weather.com.edgekey.netCNAME e7971.g.akamaiedge.net
GTP <DNS>	210	0xfb88 CNAME appleweather-cache.internal.query.g03.yahoodns.netA 98.
GTP <DNS>	214	0x7d25 CNAME www.apple.com.edgekey.netCNAME e3191.dscc.akamaiedge.ne
GTP <DNS>	237	0x7d92 CNAME a5.mzstatic.com.edgesuite.netCNAME a5.da1.akamai.netA 2
GTP <DNS>	237	0x7ac1 CNAME a4.mzstatic.com.edgesuite.netCNAME a4.da1.akamai.netA 2
GTP <DNS>	308	0x7204 CNAME setup.icloud.com.akadns.netCNAME st11-setup.icloud.com.
GTP <DNS>	198	0xddf2 A 17.173.66.134A 17.173.66.135A 17.173.66.133A 17.173.66.136
GTP <DNS>	179	0x90d0 CNAME buy.itunes-apple.com.akadns.netA 17.173.66.179
GTP <DNS>	237	0x7d92 CNAME a5.mzstatic.com.edgesuite.netCNAME a5.da1.akamai.netA 2
GTP <DNS>	237	0x7ac1 CNAME a4.mzstatic.com.edgesuite.netCNAME a4.da1.akamai.netA 2
GTP <DNS>	308	0x7204 CNAME setup.icloud.com.akadns.netCNAME st11-setup.icloud.com.
GTP <DNS>	198	0xddf2 A 17.173.66.136A 17.173.66.134A 17.173.66.135A 17.173.66.133
GTP <DNS>	179	0x90d0 CNAME buy.itunes-apple.com.akadns.netA 17.173.66.179

- Access Internet for free
- Also access private/corporate APNs (no repeat authentication)

Gimmick: **Privacy intrusion –**

- Original subscriber can still send packets out
- Attacker receives the responses
- Can enumerate apps/services by DNS response

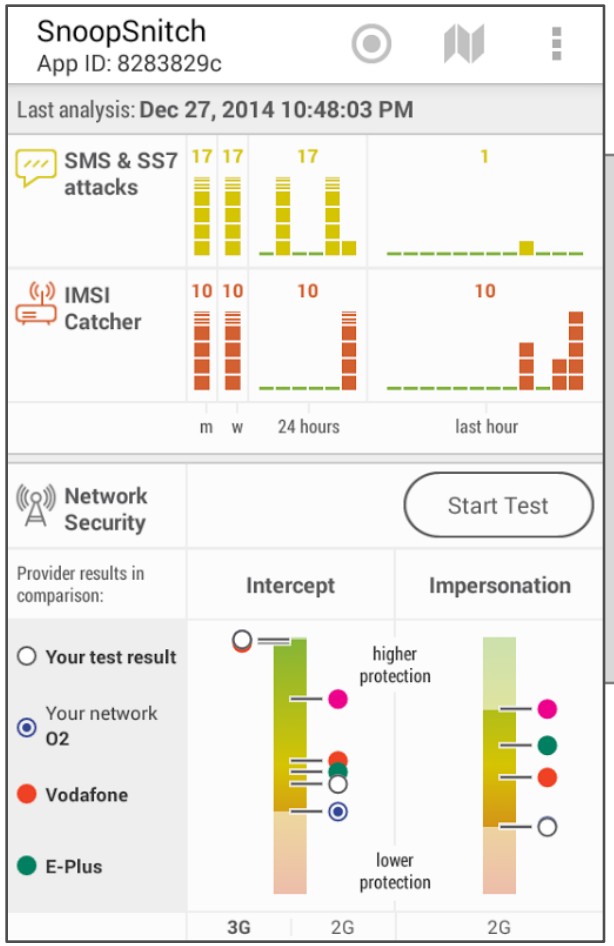
Much more filtering is needed on GRX

Attacker position		Necessary filter	Prevelance
From the Internet		**Never** expose GRX/SS7 on the Internet	Most networks have this filter, but not all
Over GRX or SS7	From non-roaming partner IP	**Never** talk to non-roaming partners	Some networks distinguish roaming partners, many don't
	Spoof roaming partner IP	Filter by GT (SS7) or IP (GRX)	Hardly anybody does these feasibility checks (yet)
	Be roaming partner	Velocity checks: Can a subscriber possibly have moved into the new network?	

Agenda

- IMSI catcher catching
- GRX attack potential
- GRX exposure
- **Research outlook**

Released today: SnoopSnitch 1.0



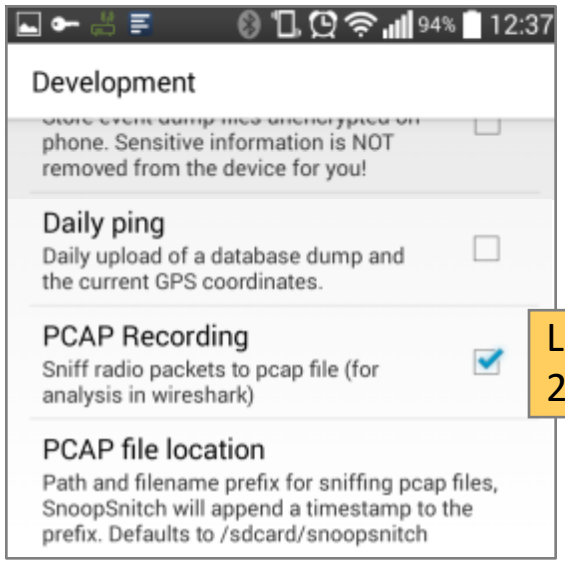
Improvements since last beta

- Better IMSI catcher metric
- Lower battery impact
- Autonomous upload option
- Daily measurement option
- Wireshark export

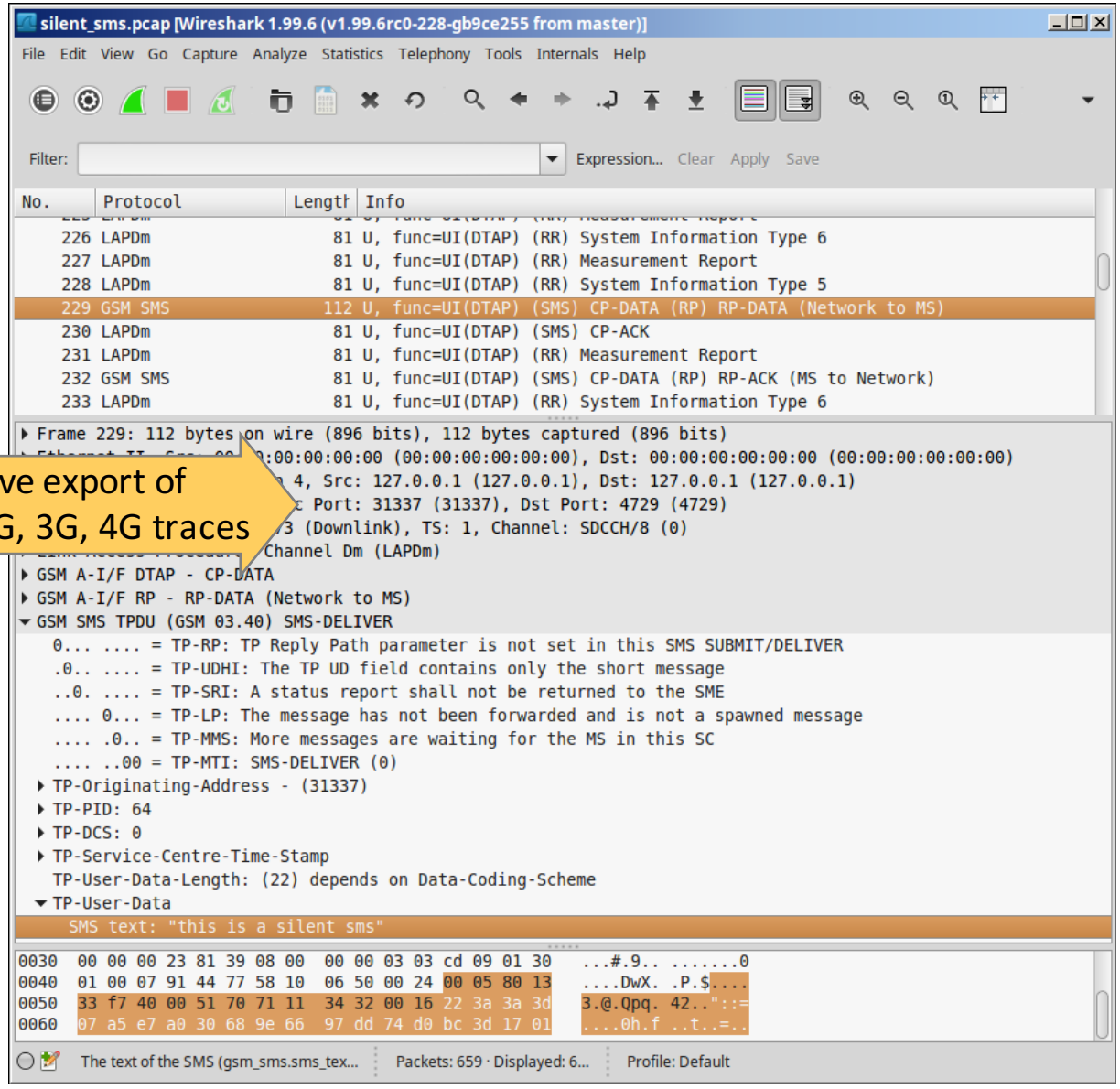
Mobile intrusion detection system

Meant for you to keep a SnoopSnitch phone running at home to spot changes/anomalies

SnoopSnitch provides access to radio traces for further research



Live export of
2G, 3G, 4G traces



Immediate research challenge: Capture the Catcher

Objective. Find ways to exploit or crash an IMSI catcher

Setup. A GSM network “crash_me” is waiting for you to do that

Tools. OsmocomBB? rad1o?

Results. Please post here: camp.snoopsnitch.com

Workshop. Results to be discussed at
- SnoopSnitch data workshop
- Day 3, 17:00, Berlin village

Catcher is waiting just outside Tor 2

Take aways.

Mobile security research involves plenty of trial and error

Attacks often fail on implementation differences, not actual defenses

GRX allows for data-enabled IMSI catchers, passive intercept, and connection hijacking; sometimes over the Internet

Next events.

Mobile security

SnoopSnitch data workshop
- Day 3, 17:00
- Berlin village

Capture the catcher
- All camp long
- camp.snoopsnitch.com

Other SRLabs

Fuzzing with AFL
- Day 2; 16:00
- Hackcenter 1

Biometrics hacks
- Day 3; 14:30
- Hardware Hacking area

Hardware hack playground
- All camp long
- SRLabs camper

Questions?

Karsten Nohl <nohl@srlabs.de>
Luca Melette <luca@srlabs.de>