Claims

1. A fraud detection system comprising:

a call switching unit for receiving an incoming call;

a call information extraction unit for processing the incoming call to extract call signalling information associated with the incoming call including a phone number of the calling party;

an age determination unit for determining an age of the phone number of the calling party; and

a fraud scoring unit for determining a fraud score associated with the incoming call using the determined age, the fraud score indicating a likelihood that the incoming call is from a fraudulent caller.

2. The fraud detection system of claim 1, wherein the call switching unit is configured to forward the incoming call to one of a number of different destinations based on the fraud score determined by the fraud scoring unit or wherein the incoming call has a plurality of associated destinations and wherein the call switching unit is configured to select one of the associated destinations based on the determined fraud score.

3. The fraud detection system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the age determination unit is configured to determine an approximate time when the phone number was activated by a communications provider when determining the age of the phone number of the calling party.

4. The fraud detection system of claim 3, wherein the age determination unit is configured to determine the age of the phone number of the calling party by calculating the difference in time between a current time and the approximate time that the phone number was activated.

5. The fraud detection system of any preceding claim, wherein the age determination unit is configured to use digits from the extracted phone number of the calling party to look up a database to determine the age of the phone number.

6. The fraud detection system of any preceding claim, wherein the fraud determining unit is arranged to determine a fraud score indicating a higher likelihood

that the incoming call is from a fraudulent caller the younger the determined age of the phone number of the caller.

7. A fraud detection system comprising:

means for receiving an incoming call;

means for processing the incoming call to extract call signalling information associated with the incoming call, including a phone number of the calling party;

means for determining an age of the phone number of the calling party; and

means for determining a fraud score associated with the incoming call using the determined age of the phone number, the fraud score indicating the likelihood that the incoming call is from a fraudulent caller.

8. The fraud detection system of claim 7, further comprising means for forwarding the incoming call to one of a number of different destinations based on the determined fraud score or means for forwarding the incoming call together with the determined fraud score to a remote destination.

9. The fraud detection system of claim 7 or 8, wherein the means for determining the age is configured to determine an approximate time when the phone number was activated by a communications provider.

10. The fraud detection system of claim 9, wherein the means for determining the age is configured to determine the age of the phone number of the calling party by calculating the difference in time between a current time and the approximate time that the phone number was activated.

11. The fraud detection system of any of claims 7 to 10, wherein the means for determining the age is configured to use digits from the extracted phone number of the calling party to look up a database to determine the age of the phone number.

12. The fraud detection system of any of claims 7 to 11, wherein the means for determining a fraud score is arranged to determine a fraud score indicating a higher likelihood that the incoming call is from a fraudulent caller the younger the determined age of the phone number of the caller.

13. A fraud detection method comprising:

receiving an incoming call;

processing the incoming call to extract call signalling information associated with the incoming call including a phone number of the calling party;

determining an age of the phone number of the calling party; and

determining a fraud score associated with the incoming call using the determined age, the fraud score indicating a likelihood that the incoming call is from a fraudulent caller.

14. The fraud detection method of claim 13, further comprising forwarding the incoming call to one of a number of different destinations based on the determined fraud score.

15. The fraud detection method of claim 13 or 14, wherein the step of determining the age determines an approximate time when the phone number was activated by a communications provider.

16. The fraud detection method of claim 15, wherein the step of determining the age determines the age of the phone number of the calling party by calculating the difference in time between a current time and the approximate time that the phone number was activated.

17. The fraud detection method of any of claims 13 to 16, wherein the step of determining the age uses digits from the extracted phone number of the calling party to look up a database to determine the age of the phone number.

18. The fraud detection method of any of claims 13 to 17, wherein the step of determining a fraud score determines a fraud score indicating a higher likelihood that the incoming call is from a fraudulent caller the younger the determined age of the phone number of the caller.

19. A computer program product comprising computer implementable instructions which, when run on a programmable computer device, cause the programmable computer device to perform the method of any of claims 13 to 18.