



Exploding The Phone

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Abstract	Electronic rip-off artists are getting Ma Bell's number with less frequency. Michigan Bell detected so-called black, blue, or red boxes - devices used to bypass phone company toll equipment - only fifteen times in 1977. Those were mainly inquisitive juveniles, a Bell spokesman said, and in each case the firm decided not to prosecute. By contrast, in 1972, 34 cases of electronic toll fraud resulted in the conviction of 17 persons. Bell's total losses last year from all forms of phone cheating amount to about \$700,000.
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tipoff

inside the news with
the people who make it



BEEP BLIPPED

Bell Says It Has Cut Wires On Long-Distance Cheaters

- **ELECTRONIC RIP-OFF ARTISTS** are getting Ma Bell's number with less frequency. Michigan Bell detected so-called black, blue or red boxes — devices used to bypass phone company toll equipment — only 15 times in 1977. Those were mainly inquisitive juveniles, a Bell spokesman said, and in each case the firm decided not to prosecute. By contrast, in 1972, 34 cases of electronic toll fraud resulted in the convictions of 17 persons. Bell credits newer machinery, better surveillance, stricter laws and a beefed-up security force for the decline. Bell's total losses last year from all forms of phone cheating amount to about \$700,000.