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ComReg sets out framework for Voice over Internet Services in Ireland

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) today set out the framework for the provision of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services in Ireland.

VoIP is a technology that allows users to make and receive calls over the Internet rather than the public telephone network.

ComReg's decision will allow for the establishment of a new telephone number range for the purposes of allowing the introduction of VoIP services. ComReg will also allow operators of these services to use existing geographic numbers for VoIP services.

One of the key benefits of VoIP is potentially lower call costs. It can also allow a range of services such as enhanced conference and video calling.

The main decisions in this paper are as follows:

1. ComReg intends to open a new number range (access code 076) for the purposes of facilitating the introduction of VoIP services.
2. ComReg also intends to allow operators of these types of services access to geographic numbers subject to some restrictions, which are put in place to protect the existing telephone users. (A geographic number is a number associated with a certain area – e.g. 021 for Cork).
3. Services such as Freephone and Lo-call will be available through VoIP.
4. ComReg is requiring operators to inform consumers as to the differences between traditional voice services and Voice over internet protocol (VoIP). This information is necessary to ensure that consumers can make an informed decision as to the type of product they are selecting.

Commenting on the paper, David Gunning, ComReg's Director of Market Framework said: "Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is a major development in telecommunications. While the traditional switched network continues to serve us well in providing voice services, we are now entering a new era of voice services in the Internet age. We are committed to fostering innovation and facilitating the development of new services for the benefit of consumers. ComReg's aim is to provide a clear framework to operators and consumers for the provision of these next generation voice services. ComReg's decision has been reached following extensive consultation with industry and consumers."

The full paper on this issue ComReg 04/103 is available on the ComReg website www.comreg.ie

ComReg has also issued a brief guide to this paper which is available on the ComReg website. It is document - ComReg 04/103a – A user's guide to VoIP.

ENDS

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