

Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

PRESS RELEASE

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FRAMEWORK FOR NUMBER PORTABILITY SET BY REGULATOR

Starting from 1st January, 2000 telephone users will be able to change to a new telecommunications service provider without having to change their telephone numbers. The Telecoms Regulator today issued her decisions regarding the implementation of number portability in Ireland and announced that she will require operators and service providers to begin its execution on a phased basis from the start of the new millennium.

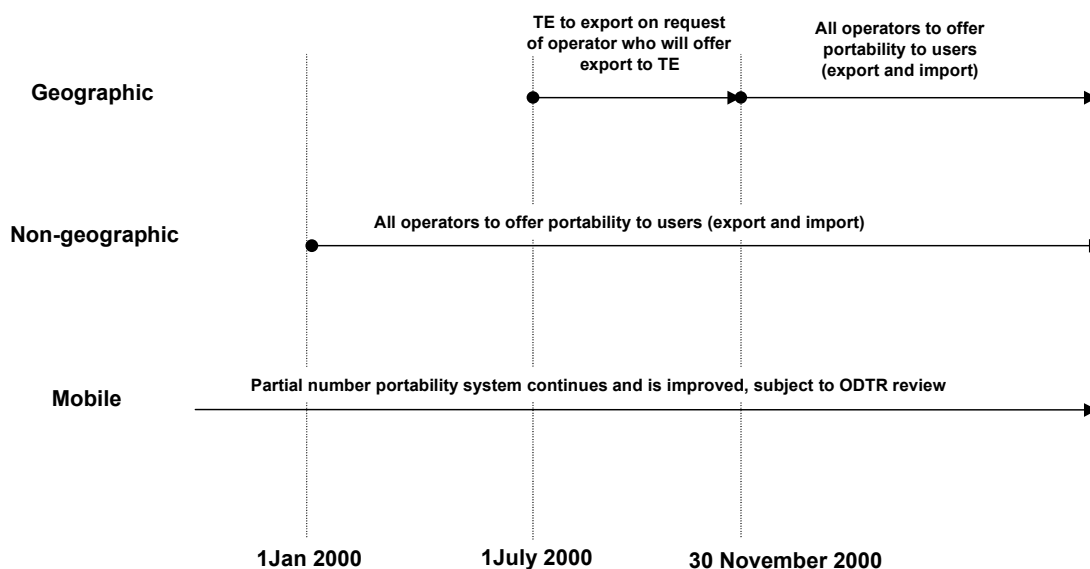
From Jan 1 2000 number portability of non-geographic numbers (i.e. numbers whose prefix does not denote location such as freephone, premium rate, shared cost) will be required. This requirement will be extended to geographic numbers (i.e. numbers that indicate location such as 01 – Dublin, 021-Cork, 043-Longford) on 1st July 2000. The current system of partial number portability between mobile operators will continue in the short term.

Decision Notice D1/99 “Introducing Number Portability in Ireland” ODTR 99/24 forms the regulatory framework for implementing number portability in Ireland. It follows an extensive consultation process which included a consultation document, a seminar and direct interviews with interested parties. A committee representing regulatory, industry and consumer interests will now be established to consider the practical implementation issues. The deadlines for the completion of key tasks will be set by the ODTR.

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“Our consultations have proved that there is agreement on the need to rapidly implement number portability to encourage the development of competition. I believe that this will remove one of the main barriers to consumers switching between telecommunications service providers” said the Director. “We have succeeded in resolving a number of key issues, culminating in the development of a regulatory framework for implementing number portability – a framework which is essential if we are to see the liberalised telecommunications market develop to its full potential.”

The Decision Notice **"Introducing Number Portability in Ireland"** can be viewed on the ODTR web-site (<http://www.odtr.ie>). A graph summarising the implementation timetable is below.



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