



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

## Information Notice

### **Report of the Irish ENUM Forum**

<b>Document No:</b>	<b>04/105</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>20 October 2004</b>

## Introduction

ComReg is pleased to announce the publication of a report from the Irish ENUM Forum, which records the progress made to date in understanding ENUM and its applicability and relevance to the Irish communications marketplace.

ENUM is a protocol that matches phone numbers to their corresponding Internet domain names, in order to link between legacy services and next-generation services. ENUM offers a mechanism to contact anybody, anywhere, on the communications terminal and using the communications service that is most efficient or convenient for both parties. A fundamental part of ENUM is the use of E.164 numbers (normal telephone numbers).

In March 2003, ComReg initiated industry discussion on ENUM through the consultation document “ENUM: Accessing Multiple Customer Services through Telephone Numbers” (ComReg document 03/36). This document put forward the possible advantages of adopting ENUM for Irish consumers and industry. The response to consultation (“ENUM: Ireland’s next steps”) was published in the ComReg document 03/96 in August of 2003. The result of this consultation was that ComReg established the Irish national ENUM forum and subsequent ENUM trial. All interested parties were invited to partake in this forum and trial. An independent chair, Colm Reilly from PA Consulting, was appointed by ComReg.

The Forum was established in October 2003 with 19 separate interested parties, including representatives from the Internet world, the major telecommunications companies, the academic and government circles. The main objectives of the Forum were to determine the key objectives, parameters and deliverables of the proposed Irish ENUM trial and to oversee the implementation and ongoing performance of the trial. This was to be achieved whilst assimilating as much knowledge as possible from other, similar trials<sup>1</sup> that had been carried out elsewhere, with the aim of avoiding any unnecessary repetition.

The Forum was very fortunate in having several key ENUM figures speak, including Patrik Fältström who is the author of RFC 2916, the main ENUM protocol developed under the auspices the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).

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<sup>1</sup> Including the Austrian, South Korean, Swedish, Dutch, UK and US ENUM trials.

An important aspect of the trial is to determine practical outcomes to issues that arise in the initial technical set-up and practical implementation of ENUM. These issues especially include the protection of consumer data. The second phase of the trial involving ongoing experience of ENUM use is due to continue until March 2005.

A significant outcome of the deliberations of this Forum concerns the future of ENUM operations in an Irish context. The Forum has made practical recommendations that provide an excellent foundation for any future commercial ENUM framework in Ireland. It has offered its viewpoint on relevant issues, such as roles and responsibilities, consumer protection and likely market drivers. In particular, it is interesting to note that Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) has been acknowledged to be a major enabler of ENUM and vice versa, with evidence of this being found in the key Japanese and US VoIP markets. In that respect it is important to recognise the high degree of synergy that exists between these two protocols and the current release of this ENUM report therefore builds on the important initiative undertaken with the publication last week of ComReg's VoIP document 04/103<sup>2</sup>.

Taking note of the key recommendations of the Forum's report, it is expected that ENUM will move into full commercial operation after VoIP services have been more widely adopted and alternative addressing mechanisms have a broader appeal. The very thorough foundation that both the Forum and trial have produced means that when the market creates a solid demand for ENUM, it will be a relatively straightforward matter to manage a commercial launch.

All of the above issues are further clarified and discussed in the accompanying report, prepared by PA Consulting Group on behalf of the Forum.

Finally, ComReg wishes to thank the Forum participants and external speakers for their active support of the Forum, for the very valuable experience and knowledge that they have brought to the Forum and the trial and for the important contributions of resources that were made in certain cases.

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<sup>2</sup> ComReg 04/103: VoIP services in Ireland – Numbering and related issues.