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Internet technology could help deliver enhanced voice services at lower costs

ComReg today released a Briefing Note about using Internet Protocol (IP) technology – the technology behind the Internet – to deliver enhanced voice services at potentially lower costs. Known as Voice over IP (VoIP), this technology can enable a range of new features including personalised phone settings and integration of voice with other Internet-based services. This Briefing Note, which is part of ComReg’s Forward-Looking Programme, outlines some of the new functions and benefits that VoIP could bring to consumers and operators of voice communication services.

Among the features that VoIP can offer is unified messaging (UM), which allows users to access their messages from a single mailbox regardless of whether they are on voice-mail, email or text. An important benefit of VoIP is greater integration of voice and Internet services which could help to enhance services such as e-commerce, by allowing customers to speak to company representatives through their websites for example.

VoIP technology could allow operators of telecommunications networks to become more efficient through consolidation and convergence of their existing separate voice and data networks, thus saving on operational costs. This should translate into improved efficiency and lower call costs for end users.

At present there are still issues regarding the quality and reliability of VoIP that need to be resolved before it could be seen as a substitute for PSTN voice service. Further technical and service developments however should in time overcome such difficulties.

VoIP is currently being deployed in private communication networks in Ireland, and has been used for low-cost international voice services. According to **Etain Doyle**, Chairperson of ComReg, “As our current telecommunications networks evolve towards Next Generation Networks, voice telephony will remain an important service, but will evolve both in terms of how it is delivered and ways in which it can be utilised”. The full document 03/21 can be viewed on www.comreg.ie

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