



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

Media Release

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Telecoms Regulator proposes to Introduce Full Mobile Number Portability towards the end 2002

Etain Doyle, Telecoms Regulator today (26th January 2001) announced that she is to commence work on the introduction of full mobile number portability in Ireland and has set a indicative date towards the end of 2002 for its implementation.

This service will allow Irish Mobile users to switch between mobile operators and retain their existing mobile number. Full mobile number portability removes a very significant barrier to changing operator and enhances competition. Currently Irish Mobile users have a limited form of portability in that the basic subscriber number but not the prefix i.e. 086 or 087 can be retained when moving between operators.

In the interim, in order to ensure an adequate supply of mobile numbers the Regulator has decided that from July 2001 she will open up number ranges beginning with 0 and 1 .

eg 087 1XX XXXX and 086 1XX XXXX

or 087 0XX XXXX and 086 0XX XXXX.

The implications of this are that mobile customers dialling another user on the same network will have to dial the full number including the prefix. In the past it was possible to call a customer on the same network by dialling the seven-digit subscriber number only.

The Regulator also announced that she is to set up an industry advisory group which will make recommendations with respect to the technical, process and financial steps necessary to ensure the timely and efficient introduction of number portability in

Ireland. Already other European countries are increasingly moving ahead to full mobile number portability. By March 2002 up to 10 EU member states will have implemented it. Indications are that the European Community is also likely to introduce legislation requiring member states to implement full mobile number portability.

According to the Regulator “with several new mobile operators expected to enter the market in the context of the introduction of 3G services including virtual operators together with the demands of existing mobile operators the current partial portability system will become increasingly unwieldy and wasteful of mobile numbers. Full mobile number portability on the other hand will not only resolve these difficulties but will very much enhance the opportunities open to the new players and enhance competition ultimately benefiting the consumer.”

This move to Full Number Portability is outlined in Decision Notice D1/01 (Document ODTR 01/03 “Mobile Numbering and Mobile Number Portability in Ireland” and is available on the ODTR website (www.odtr.ie). Copies can also be obtained from the ODTR.

This Decision follows a period of public consultation and it takes account of responses to her discussion paper on this subject.

ENDS

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