



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Thursday 14th December 2000

Telecoms Regulator to Consult on Internet Access Codes

Telecoms Regulator Eoin Doyle today (14th December 2000) indicated that she wished to investigate the possibility of opening up new access codes and number ranges specifically for Internet traffic and has issued a consultation paper on the matter. She is particularly anxious to hear the views of the telecommunications industry, Internet service providers and consumer groups.

According to the Regulator “Internet usage has rapidly increased with Internet penetration in Ireland now at about 30%. Latest figures suggest that the residential Internet Market in Ireland is experiencing very strong growth. As of September 2000 there were over 1 million people accessing the Internet from home a 50% increase from March 2000. This rapid increase is indicative of the vibrancy and the dynamism of the Internet market in Ireland.”

The ODTR wishes to set the framework that facilitates the continued development of this sector by examining the possibility of opening new access codes and number ranges that are dedicated to Internet traffic.

Currently the main Internet access pricing models include the following three categories:

- “Pay-as-you-go” (PAYG) or "Freeserve" type models: the customer pays for the telephone calls to access the Internet but does not pay any subscription fees to the Internet Service Provider (ISP);
- “Flat rate” or untimed type models: the customer pays no call charges but pays a regular subscription to the ISP that allows them to access the Internet for a set number of hours, or even for unlimited time. This is sometimes limited to particular times of day; and
- Hybrid models: the customer chooses a mix of subscription charges and call charges that gives them the best deal, depending on their pattern of use of the Internet.

The “1891” access code has thus far been used for Internet access services based on the hybrid charging model.

The “1890” shared cost (local call charge regardless of location) access code may be appropriate for use with Pay as you go services, as these tend to be priced at a rate equivalent to that used for local calls.

The “1800” freephone access code could be used for flat rate services.

However , according to the Regulator “ in addition to the benefits for consumers of greater choice in terms of access pricing falling into easily recognisable code categories, the creation of codes designated specifically for Internet access traffic and linked to the Pay as you go and flat rate charging models could assist with efficient routing of traffic which should help keep prices down.”

The consultation paper ODTR 00/94 “ Allocation of additional access codes and number ranges for Internet Access” is available on the ODTR website (www.odtr.ie.)

ENDS

Issued by: Brighid Smyth, Public Affairs Manager, ODTR

Ph 01 8049639

Mobile : 086 8270905