

COMMUNICATIONS DAY

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Symbio: don't squeeze VoIP into numbering plan

VoIP provider Symbio Networks has taken to task the changes suggested in an Australian Communications and Media Authority discussion paper governing how VoIP might be integrated with existing policy and regulatory framework. Symbio argued that the paper was an attempt to alter VoIP to fit with the existing framework around the telecommunications Numbering Plan and that such a measure would be a backward step, suggesting instead that regulation should evolve to keep pace with the transition to IP networks.

The Numbering Plan, said Symbio, was less relevant to VoIP networks than traditional PSTN for a number of reasons. These included the fact that the original Numbering Plan (based on geographical zonings) was based on geographically specific PSTN architecture deployed in the sixties, while VoIP call routing is based on IP addresses and independent of geographic numbering. PSTN call charging, Symbio argued, was determined by numbering with location information, while VoIP call charging was decoupled from numbering and rendered concepts like zoning, local and trunk calls irrelevant.

"The regulatory requirement of the Numbering Plan to provide untimed local calls can be met with VoIP without it having to conform to geographical numbering," asserted Symbio. "It is not that VoIP is non-compliant. Rather, it is the policy settings and the regulatory framework including the Numbering Plan that requires updating to bring it into the new world of IP."

"Based on the information provided in this submission, that ACMA 'is considering amending the Numbering Plan to ensure that all geographical numbers are issued consistently with the locations to which numbers are allocated' seems completely ignorant to the fundamental differences between PSTN and NGN/VoIP, and is akin to arbitrarily grafting modern telecommunications developments to an out-dated Plan."

"The telecommunications industry around the world is transforming to a broadband, IP centric network," concluded Symbio. "It would therefore be a backward step if a new and innovative service like VoIP is required to arbitrarily fit into an outdated plan."

Petroc Wilton