



Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2005-9

Ottawa, 7 July 2005

Bell Digital Voice Service

Reference: 8661-C12-200507973 and Bell Canada Tariff Notices 6874, 6874A and 6878

In this Public Notice, the Commission invites comments on applications received from Bell Canada for the introduction of Bell Digital Voice service.

The applications

1. The Commission received an *ex parte* application by Bell Canada, dated 26 May 2005 and amended on 8 June 2005, proposing the introduction of a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) service called Bell Digital Voice. The Commission approved the application on an interim basis, effective 14 June 2005, in Telecom Order CRTC 2005-223.
2. By way of a letter dated 16 June 2005, the Commission advised interested parties to *Regulatory framework for voice communication services using Internet Protocol*, Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2004-2, 7 April 2004, that it would provide parties with the opportunity to comment on Bell Canada's application in the context of a public notice.
3. The Commission received Bell Canada Tariff Notice 6878, dated 16 June 2005, proposing revisions to Bell Digital Voice service regarding the provision of 9-1-1 service. The company also proposed a revision to reflect that per-line call display blocking was not available at this time. The Commission approved the application on an interim basis, effective 30 June 2005, in Telecom Order CRTC 2005-246.

Background

4. In *Regulatory framework for voice communication services using Internet Protocol*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2005-28, 12 May 2005 (Decision 2005-28), the Commission set out the details of the appropriate regulatory regime applicable to the provision of VoIP services, which it defined as voice communication services using Internet Protocol (IP) that use telephone numbers that conform to the North American Numbering Plan, and that provide universal access to and/or from the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).
5. In Decision 2005-28, the Commission determined, among other things, that local VoIP services should be regulated as local exchange services and that the regulatory framework governing local competition, set out in *Local Competition*, Telecom Decision CRTC 97-8, 1 May 1997 and subsequent determinations, applies to local VoIP service providers, except as otherwise provided in Decision 2005-28. In particular, the Commission addressed the following matters with respect to implementation of this regulatory framework: registration of VoIP resellers, access to numbers and local number portability, directory listings, equal access, winbacks, access for the disabled, message relay service, privacy safeguards, tariff filing requirements,

regulation of non-dominant carriers, regulation of VoIP services in territories where local competition is not permitted, and IP interconnection.

6. In *Emergency service obligations for local VoIP service providers*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2005-21, 4 April 2005, the Commission directed Canadian carriers supporting nomadic local VoIP services or fixed/non-native local VoIP services to implement an interim solution, within 90 days from the date of the Decision, which provides a level of 9-1-1 service, in areas where 9-1-1/E9-1-1 service is available from the incumbent local exchange carrier, that is functionally comparable to Basic 9-1-1 service.

Bell Digital Voice service

7. Bell Canada indicated that its Bell Digital Voice service, available to residential customers in Quebec or Ontario, allows for real-time two-way conversations via high-speed Internet service connections, which customers may obtain from any service provider. Customers may communicate with others who are connected to the PSTN. For a fixed monthly rate, customers can obtain unlimited local calling, various calling features and, depending upon the plan selected by the customer, unlimited provincial, national¹, or North American (Canada and United States) calling. Bell Canada added that optional features are also available at monthly rates. In addition, there is a registration fee which includes the first month of service.
8. With respect to the pricing of Bell Digital Voice service, Bell Canada filed for the Commission's approval on a confidential basis, minimum and maximum rates associated with each of the proposed plans. The company requested that the confidential status of the minimum and maximum rates be maintained after approval. In support of its application, the company provided a cost study demonstrating that the rates corresponding to the lowest point in each of the ranges satisfied the Commission's imputation test requirements.
9. Bell Canada indicated that for all future price changes within a range, it would issue new tariff pages on the effective date and provide, in confidence, copies to the Commission 48 hours in advance. Bell Canada submitted that rates would be applied equally to all customers. For price decreases, the new rates would be applied to all customers as of the effective date. Price increases would become effective immediately for new customers, and the company would provide existing customers with 30 days notice commencing with bills issued on the effective date of the increase.
10. With regard to 9-1-1 calls originated by Bell Digital Voice service customers, Bell Canada indicated that the caller's location and telephone number are not automatically transmitted with a 9-1-1 call. The caller must orally provide the information to an operator answering the call.
11. Bell Canada stated that for calls made within Ontario and Quebec, an operator will answer the 9-1-1 call, request the caller's location and emergency service required and route the call to the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) serving the location provided by the caller. For 9-1-1 calls made from within Canada but outside Ontario and Quebec, the operator will answer the 9-1-1 call, request the caller's location and emergency service required and transfer the call

¹ The Unlimited Canada Plan is no longer available for new installations, moves, rearrangements or other changes at the same or different premises, as of 14 June 2005.

to an operator serving the location provided by the caller. The operator receiving the transfer will route the call to the PSAP serving the location provided by the caller. Bell Canada added that 9-1-1 calls made from locations outside of Canada cannot be completed by the operator. The caller will be told to use an alternate service to dial 9-1-1.

12. Bell Canada indicated that equal access was not available with Bell Digital Voice service at the present time. Bell Canada was of the view that the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) should be mandated to identify issues associated with the implementation of equal access in relation to VoIP services, and to report back to the Commission with its conclusions, including possible solutions and timelines, within a period of 12 months from the time the Commission would issue directives to CISC.
13. Bell Canada identified that its Bell Digital Voice service currently supports the following privacy safeguards: delivery of the privacy indicator when invoked by an end-customer, provision of automated universal per-call blocking of calling line identification, disallowance of Call Return to a blocked number, and enforcement of the Commission's restrictions on Automatic Dialling-Announcing Devices, Automatic Dialling Devices and unsolicited facsimiles.
14. Bell Canada indicated that its Bell Digital Voice service offers both primary and secondary numbers from a range of NPA-NXXs across Canada, and allows customers to make and receive calls as if they were physically located in the exchanges associated with their telephone numbers.

Call for comments

15. The Commission invites parties to provide comments on any aspect of Bell Canada's proposed Bell Digital Voice service.

Procedure

16. Bell Canada is made a party to this proceeding.
17. Other parties wishing to participate fully in this proceeding must notify the Commission of their intention to do so, by **15 July 2005**. They should contact the Secretary General by mail at CRTC, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N2, by fax at (819) 994-0218 or by email at procedure@crtc.gc.ca. They are to indicate in the notice their e-mail address where available. If parties do not have access to the Internet, they are to indicate in their notice whether they wish to receive disk versions of hard copy filings.
18. The Commission will issue, as soon as possible after the registration date, a complete list of parties and their mailing address (including their e-mail address, if available), identifying those parties who wish to receive disk versions.
19. Any party who wishes merely to file written comments, without receiving copies of the various submissions, may do so by writing to the Commission at the address noted above by **29 July 2005**.

20. Parties may address interrogatories to Bell Canada. Any such interrogatories must be filed with the Commission and served on the company by **29 July 2005**.
21. Responses to those interrogatories are to be filed with the Commission and served on all parties by **29 August 2005**.
22. Requests by parties for further responses to their interrogatories, specifying in each case why a further response is both relevant and necessary, and requests for public disclosure of information for which confidentiality has been claimed, setting out in each case the reasons for disclosure, must be filed with the Commission and served on Bell Canada by **6 September 2005**.
23. Written responses to requests for further responses to interrogatories and for public disclosure must be filed with the Commission and served on the party who made the request by **13 September 2005**.
24. A determination with respect to requests for further information and public disclosure will be made as soon as possible. Any information to be provided pursuant to that determination must be filed with the Commission and served on all parties by **30 September 2005**.
25. Parties may file arguments with the Commission on any matter within the scope of this proceeding, serving copies on all other parties, by **21 October 2005**.
26. Bell Canada is to file its reply with the Commission, serving a copy on all other parties, by **4 November 2005**.
27. The Commission expects to issue a decision within 90 days after the record closes.
28. Where a document is to be filed or served by a specific date, the document must be actually received, not merely sent, by that date.
29. Parties may file their submissions electronically or on paper. Submissions longer than five pages should include a summary.
30. Each paragraph of submissions should be numbered.
31. Where the submission is filed by electronic means, the line *****End of document***** should be entered following the last paragraph of the document, as an indication that the document has not been damaged during electronic transmission.
32. Please note that only those submissions electronically filed will be placed on the Commission's website and only in the official language and format in which they are submitted.
33. The Commission encourages parties to monitor the record of this proceeding (and/or the Commission's website) for additional information that they may find useful when preparing their submissions.

Important

34. All information submitted, including your name, e-mail address, and any other information not submitted under a claim for confidentiality, will be posted on the Commission's website. Documents received in electronic format will be posted on the Commission's website exactly as you send them, and in the official language and format in which they are received. Documents not received electronically will be available in .pdf format.

Location of CRTC offices

35. Submissions may be examined or will be made available promptly upon request at the Commission offices during normal business hours:

Central Building

Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
1 Promenade du Portage, Room 206
Gatineau, Quebec J8X 4B1
Tel: (819) 997-2429 - TDD: 994-0423
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Secretary General

This document is available in alternative format upon request, and may also be examined in PDF format or in HTML at the following Internet site: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca>