NEWSLETTER

WELCOME!!

Welcome to the second NICC Standards newsletter. In the newsletter we seek to keep you up to date on what's been going on at NICC: to remind you of the benefits of membership, and highlight work areas where you may wish to be involved. Please feel free to distribute this newsletter as you wish.

NICC Open Forum

Every year NICC holds an Open Forum, to which we invite expert speakers to present on the hot topics in telecommunications.

This year's Open Forum has been scheduled for the 30th November at IET Savoy Place in central London, and we're currently in the process of putting together what should hopefully be an interesting and thought provoking day.

This year we're intending that the morning will concentrate on activities which are core to the current work of NICC, while the afternoon will look at issues we may need to focus on in the future. As ever, there'll be plenty of time for networking.

So in the morning we plan for presentations on how we're developing standards for Active Line Access (ALA) to facilitate competitive next generation access and what this means for provision of voice services in the future.

In the afternoon we'll move on to a diverse series of topics. We'll look at how communications will increasingly be between machines: a revolution in the power industry is foreseen via the introduction of Smartgrids, which obviously will be heavily reliant on communications networks. We'll examine how femtocells and wi-fi are becoming part of a unified communications infrastructure. And we'll see how Ofcom seek to exploit the fruits of the spectrum dividend.

For further information, see our microsite, or contact nick.Ireland@niccstandards.org.uk. To register, email openforum@niccstandards.org.uk.

NICC AGM

On the same day and location as the Open Forum we'll be holding our Annual General Meeting. This is your opportunity to keep tabs on the Directors, ensuring that your membership contributions are being well directed. The AGM will follow after the Open Forum, at 16:15.

Agreement with the IET

Since NICC became a freestanding organisation, we've contracted with the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) to provide our secretariat and support functions. This contract was originally a three way one between NICC Standards, the IET and Ofcom (as they provided transitional funding). Two years on we felt it was time to review and amend this arrangement; we're pleased to report that NICC and the IET have agreed a new contract.

Moving forward, we're intending to seek ways in which NICC and the IET can mutually exploit synergies in our operations, for example NICC using the IET's publishing resources to raise the profile of NICC's activities and IET drawing upon the knowledge pool within NICC to inform the activities of its Professional Networks. If you'd like to get involved in this, please contact paul.rosbotham@niccstandards.org.uk.

New Publications

There are plenty of documents in our pipeline, including some which have secured working group approval but are being held as they come as part of a package with others still under preparation. However, we do have one new publication since our last newsletter:

ND1016 - Requirements on communications providers in relation to Customer Line Identification Display and other related services

This document, a thorough review of an earlier publication, clarifies the requirement to support CLIs, in particular with respect to Presentation Numbering. As usual this is available on our website.

Directors

It's with regret that we've had to accept the resignation of Les Brunton, of Utel. Les has been key in the organisation of the Open Forum and we'll miss his guiding hand.

Location Information for 999

As reported in our last newsletter, we've published ND1638, VOIP - Location for Emergency Calls (Architecture).

This document provides a framework of how calls from IP-based networks can provide meaningful location information to the emergency services, which is complicated by nomadicity of the end-user. Provision of this information is particularly important, because in the case of a call to 999 where the customer is unable to speak to confirm their location, it can be the difference between life and death. However in many cases the voice provider cannot be sure where the end-user is located, and the access provider, that does have specific address information, may not even be aware that their network is being used for voice service. ND1638 provides an architecture for joining together the links in the information chain, in order that emergency services may have location information provided.

The initial focus of the work was to cover the common case of an Internet Telephony Service Provider (ITSP), providing service over internet with access served ultimately by Openreach. The architecture isn't restricted to this case though. The Location Information Working Group is now going to be examining other "use cases" of the architecture, for example usage within enterprise IP networks and also cable access networks.

ND1638 also assumes the use of traditional networks to convey calls to the emergency services. This reflects the status quo and probably the situation for the immediately foreseeable future. However, NICC does recognise that in due course there'll be a desire to move to end-to-end IP connectivity for emergency calls, so the WG is researching the studies underway in various international fora such as IETF. If you would like to assist with this activity, contact the Location Information WG chairman, john.medland@bt.com.

Number Portability Standards

You may remember that a couple of years ago there was feverish activity within NICC to create a suite of standards for usage of a Common Numbering Database within Next Generation Networks (NGNs). Originally usage of this database was going to be mandated by regulation, but following a successful approach to the Competition Appeals Tribunal by some communications providers, this mandate was temporarily withdrawn while the cost-benefit analysis was reviewed.

Things have moved on since then and notably the pace of deployment of NGNs has slowed. Ofcom has therefore concluded that it no longer makes sense to re-introduce the regulatory mandate, hence the status quo should prevail for the network support of number portability in the UK. Ofcom do, however, make it clear that the routeing of calls on an individual number basis could be a key facilitator to preserving geographic numbers, once NGNs are sufficiently rolled out to make this worth while.

NICC has therefore concluded that the Common Numbering Database standards will remain published, on the basis of providing guidance to NGN designers of how such a database could be used, should there either be a collective industry desire or regulatory mandate.

Meanwhile we're concerned that our earlier published standards for number portability are somewhat out of date, being a decade old. We're conscious that they're cluttered with options which were in the event never implemented, which makes if difficult for a lay reader to understand what has actually been implemented in the UK. Therefore, we're currently reviewing these documents to align them with reality: hopefully, this will be a reasonably non-controversial exercise, that should be completed within the next few months. The "volunteers" for this work are paul.rosbotham@niccstandards.org.uk for GNP & NGNP, Martin.Harris@t-mobile.co.uk for MNP.

WE NEED YOU!!

As ever, all new participation is welcome. Contact paul.rosbotham@niccstandards.org.uk to arrange a chat about where you could add value and derive benefit, and we'll get you on the mailing list.