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VoIP Peering

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A Big Deal for Those Who Understand It!

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It is one thing to be ignorant, but seek knowledge. It is another thing altogether to be ignorant, but spread a limited view and understanding of an important subject to others that seek the truth. Misperceptions perpetually communicated in conversations, presentations, articles, blogs and the like do nothing for those that want to learn and act only as an impediment for those that know and want to properly educate. We've dealt with this issue in the industry for many years now and there exists no easy solution. The only thing to do is to try and combat the forces of ignorance with an equal, if not larger, dose of reality.

Let's boil down VoIP Peering to two things that everyone must know before they can speak about it, or try to learn anything about the particular services, or available providers:

1. IP is not the Internet and therefore VoIP does not mean Voice over the Internet.

Internet Protocol is a protocol. The Internet is a network of networks interconnected together based on "peering" agreements that involve a physical connection at some point. There are many, several hundred if not thousands of, IP networks that never touch the public Internet. Voice as IP over those private IP networks is still VoIP. It is not VoPI — Voice over the Public Internet.

2. The value or utility of VoIP Peering is not limited to the number of reachable endpoints.

When VoIP Peering was first introduced as a term it referred specifically to the wholesale exchange of voice traffic using IP as the provisioning mechanism for the circuit. For those not aware, the wholesale minutes business deals with bi-lateral exchanges primarily. VoIP traffic replaced TDM circuit-switched traffic. That's all. Not to trivialize what IP did, but there has been way too much emphasis placed on VoIP peering in conjunction with on-net endpoint routing for "free" calls. This is misguided at best. Yes, it is true that endpoint resolution through ENUM, SRV and other methods can enable "free" calls between IP networks, but this is only a small part of the broader spectrum of VoIP Peering.

Why are these two facts important? Without understanding these basic principles, those that seek knowledge can be misled and those that attempt to educate only poison those inquiring minds. By starting all conversations and learning from this basis, real progress can be made. Feel free to share. Let's not waste any more time. IT

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