



Consumer cowboys risking the reputation of enterprise VoIP

Consumer VoIP operators selling services into the enterprise market are selling false promises and devaluing the industry, according to the head of one of Australia's business-focused IP telephony providers.

Responding to analyst findings that Australian enterprises see VoIP as a major infrastructure investment, ISPhone Managing Director Gavin McDougal said the research highlighted the need for companies to make the right decision when selecting their service. He claims Australia is plagued by service providers dressing up consumer offerings as full-fledged enterprise services, and they could be doing long-lasting damage to the industry.

ISPhone is one of a number of companies ramping up to meet strong anticipated demand for VoIP services in the Australian small and medium enterprise market. The consumer market is dominated by free and low-revenue options and big business has already made the switch, so SME looks to be the logical growth opportunity.

According to McDougal though, cowboy operators are risking the reputation of VoIP as a business application. "Many residential VoIP providers claim that their solution can be used for businesses, but their services run entirely over the public internet using very simple CPE, and can't deliver the call quality that is essential for a professional environment," McDougal said. "Choosing the wrong service and product for your needs will lead to a bad experience – and will damage the reputation of business VoIP in Australia."

McDougal's call comes as the recently formed Communications Alliance works to improve the standards of Australia's VoIP industry. CA recently published a series of fact-sheets for service providers and consumers, and has undertaken significant research in area of quality of service. Its next VoIP industry forum will be held in Sydney in early December.

According to McDougal, it's important that the industry differentiate the various levels of VoIP service available. "Residential services are designed for the home and are an excellent option for the home user to gain significant savings on their telephone bill," he said. "But if you are looking for a high quality, robust and secure VoIP solution that will deliver the level of service and reliability businesses demand, it's essential to look into a business grade service and CPE that runs over a dedicated VoIP network."

McDougal's comments follow the release of new Frost & Sullivan research last week which showed that "poor service satisfaction is compounding the already high levels of solution complexity and lack of in-house telephony skills" for Australian enterprises considering VoIP.

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