CC Docket 96-152

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USWEST

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

May 9, 1996

Ms. Rose Crellin
Policy and Program Planning Division
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 544
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Alarm monitoring Services

Dear Ms. Crellin:

This is in response to your request for information regarding U S WEST Communications (USWC) services relating to the alarm monitoring business. USWC provides telecommunications transport services to alarm monitoring companies who in turn provide alarm monitoring services to their customers or patrons. USWC's transport services facilitate specialized telecommunications between the security equipment located on the premises of the patron of the alarm monitoring company and the alarm monitoring company's surveillance center. USWC does not offer any alarm monitoring services directly to customers who wish to have their premises or environmental conditions monitored.

USWC offers two different transport products to alarm monitoring companies that permit them to monitor conditions on their patrons' premises via the patron's regular telephone line. These products are known generically in the alarm industry as derived local channel services. One product is marketed under the name Scan Alert™ Service. The other is known as Versanet® Service. Both Scan Alert™ and Versanet® are provided over the switched network and used by alarm monitoring companies to monitor the environment of residence and business locations for burglary , fire, or life safety events. Other possible uses include monitoring environmental conditions (e.g. greenhouses and retail freezers).

The Scan Alert™ Service requires the following components: a subscriber terminal unit (STU) on the alarm monitoring company patron's premises, which is provided by the alarm monitoring company; a scanner and a router located on USWC's premises, provided by USWC; and a terminal device located at the alarm monitoring company's surveillance center, provided by the alarm monitoring company. USWC connects the patron's premises to the scanner via a derived local channel on a standard basic exchange line (e.g., 1FB, 1FR, etc.). The scanner is connected to the router which is connected, via private line facilities to the terminal device located at the alarm monitoring company's surveillance site.

The overall arrangement operates in the following manner: The STU on the premise of the alarm monitoring company's patron transmits alarm status information to the USWC central office over the patrons regular telephone line by way of a low frequency tone. The scanner located in the USWC central office checks the presence of this tone

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and also polls the STU over the telephone line for the status of alarm sensors on the patron's premises. The absence of the low frequency tone or a change in alarm sensor status is forwarded via the router to the alarm monitoring company's terminal device. The alarm monitoring company then decides what action is appropriate.

Because there is no code or protocol conversion or other enhanced service involved in Scan Alert™, it is treated as a basic telecommunications service by USWC. Scan Alert™ is currently offered by USWC in the states of Arizona, Oregon, and Washington.

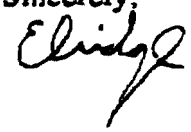
Versanet® requires the following components: a remote module located on the alarm monitoring company patron's premises, provided by the alarm monitoring company; a scanner located on USWC's premises, provided by USWC; and a terminal device located at the alarm monitoring company's surveillance center, provided by the alarm monitoring company. USWC connects the patron's remote module to the central office scanning device via a spread spectrum derived channel carried over a standard basic exchange line (e.g., 1FB, 1FR, etc.).

Versanet® operates in the following manner: The remote module sends alarm sensor status data to USWC's scanner over the patron's regular telephone line by way of a spread spectrum derived channel. The scanner demodulates the spread spectrum signal and converts it to Frequency Shift Key (FSK) modulation and ASCII code. The resulting data is then forwarded to the terminal device located at the alarm company. The alarm company interprets the data and determines what, if any, action to take. The scanner checks the alarm monitoring company patrons' lines every few seconds for the spread spectrum signal. If a loss of signal is recognized, the scanner sends a notification to the terminal at the alarm monitoring company's site, where appropriate action is taken.

Versanet® is treated as an enhanced service by USWC because it involves code and protocol conversion. Versanet® is offered pursuant waiver of the FCC rules[1]. A description of Versanet® is found in U S WEST's Cost Allocation Manual in Section II. Item E. Alarm Services. Versanet® is currently available in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

Please call me if you have any additional questions about these services.

Sincerely,



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[1] See In the Matter of Applied Spectrum Technologies, Inc., Memorandum Opinion and Order, ENF No. 85-6, Released July 3, 1985, and In the Matter of The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company, Memorandum Opinion and Order, AAD 6-1104, Released April 2, 1986.

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