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WORLD NEWS  EUROPE

SWEDISH TELECOMS

Internet telephone service

Some 800,000 telephone subscribers in Stockholm will from next month be able to make voice calls via the internet as a result of a service unveiled yesterday by Glocalnet, a privately owned Swedish internet network company, and Stockholm Energi, the municipal power utility.

The companies claimed the joint venture was the largest project of its kind in the world. Stockholm Telecom, a Glocalnet subsidiary, said routing calls via the internet could cut call charges by up to 50 per cent.

Rod Bishti, Stockholm Telecoms managing director, said that although the scheme would be confined initially to Stockholm Energi customers, a nationwide service would be launched in September. Stockholm Energi customers will be offered the option of making international calls and calls to cellular phones via the internet instead of through existing terrestrial and mobile networks.

Internet telephony is seen as a threat to the traditional business of large established telecoms operators. Although voice quality is frequently poorer than via a traditional phone link, switching calls through excess internet capacity normally reserved for data traffic can significantly reduce tariffs for users. Greg McIvor, Stockholm

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