

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of

Numbering Policies for Modern Communications)	WC Docket No. 13-97
)	
IP-Enabled Services)	WC Docket No. 04-36
)	
Telephone Number Requirements for IP-Enabled Services Providers)	WC Docket No. 07-243
)	
Telephone Number Portability)	CC Docket No. 95-116
)	
Developing a Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime)	CC Docket No. 01-92
)	
Connect America Fund)	WC Docket No. 10-90
)	
Numbering Resource Optimization)	CC Docket No. 99-200
)	
Petition of Vonage Holdings Corp. for Limited Waiver of Section 52.15(g)(2)(i) of the Commission’s Rules Regarding Access to Numbering Resources)	
)	
Petition of TeleCommunication Systems, Inc. and HBF Group, Inc. for Waiver of Part 52 of the Commission’s Rules)	
)	

**COMMENTS OF VONAGE HOLDINGS CORP. ON WIRELINE COMPETITION
BUREAU REPORT**

Vonage is pleased to submit comments on the Wireline Competition Bureau’s (“Bureau”) Report on the trial of direct access to numbers by interconnected VoIP providers.¹ The Bureau’s Report confirms what Vonage and others have asserted from the beginning—there are no

¹ *Numbering Policies for Modern Communications, et al.*, Report, DA 14-118 (WCB 2014) (“*Numbering Report*”).

technical obstacles to Vonage's request for direct access to numbers. More importantly, the Bureau's Report confirms that direct access to numbers by VoIP providers brings important public interest and consumer benefits. Vonage encourages the Commission to rely on the Bureau's Report and act quickly to permit interconnected VoIP providers direct access to numbers.

I. THE BUREAU'S REPORT CONFIRMS THE BENEFITS OF GRANTING VOIP PROVIDERS DIRECT ACCESS TO NUMBERS.

A. Direct Access to Numbers Serves the Public Interest.

Vonage is pleased that the Bureau's Report confirms that direct access to numbers furthers the public interest. Granting access to numbering resources to interconnected VoIP providers facilitates IP interconnection and the IP transition,² number portability,³ and the transition to bill-and-keep;⁴ it also enhances visibility into number utilization.⁵ Direct access to numbers for VoIP providers also increases competition, reduces costs for consumers, and enables VoIP providers to improve service and roll out advanced services.⁶

1. *Direct Access to Numbers Promotes the IP Transition.*

The Bureau's Report confirms that direct access to numbers promotes the transition to IP networks and the public interest benefits that will come with that transition. Specifically, during the pendency and under the auspices of the trial, Vonage successfully concluded an IP interconnection agreement with Verizon.⁷ This agreement will allow both Verizon and Vonage

² See Comments of Vonage Holdings Corp., WC Docket No. 13-97 et al., at 3-5 (filed July 19, 2013).

³ See *id.* at 6-7.

⁴ See *id.* at 7-8.

⁵ See *id.* at 8.

⁶ See *id.* at 5-6, 8-9.

⁷ *Numbering Report* at ¶ 26; Letter from Maggie McCready, Verizon, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, GN Docket No. 13-5 (Nov. 22, 2013).

customers to enjoy the quality of service and cost benefits that come from the IP exchange of traffic, including the potential to offer subscribers services that rely on end-to-end IP networks—such as high-definition voice. It will also enable Vonage to offer other enhancements without first obtaining permission from their CLEC partners.

Vonage is continuing to negotiate with other providers for IP interconnection agreements that will promise similar benefits. Remarkably, this substantial progress came as the result of a narrow trial that involved fewer than 120,000 Vonage numbers. With full access to numbering resources, Vonage will be able to vastly expand IP interconnection, to the benefit of consumers and competition.

The Commission has acknowledged that the IP transition can increase efficiencies for providers, lower costs for consumers, and power economic growth.⁸ This trial has shown that even limited access to numbers by VoIP providers facilitates that transition, as shown by the groundbreaking IP interconnection agreement between Vonage and Verizon. By acting quickly to adopt new rules based on this trial, the Commission can take a relatively small and simple step that can have dramatic public interest benefits.

2. Direct Access to Numbers Provides Numerous Benefits to Consumers.

The Bureau's Report further recognizes that direct access to numbers allows interconnected VoIP providers to improve service for their subscribers.⁹ Direct access enables IP interconnection, which, in turn, enables IP traffic exchange. When providers can exchange traffic in IP they can collaborate to implement codecs that permit high-definition voice; other IP

⁸ *Technology Transitions, et al.*, Order, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Report and Order, Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Proposal for Ongoing Data Initiative, FCC 14-5, at ¶ 2 (2014) (“*Technology Transitions Order*”).

⁹ See *Numbering Report* at ¶ 26.

innovations will follow as providers leverage IP networks to build new and innovative IP services. Direct access also reduces the costs and inefficiencies associated with obtaining numbers indirectly from a CLEC partner.

Many of those benefits will remain unrealized while Vonage is limited to the approximately 118,000 numbers it deployed during the trial. Vonage therefore encourages the Commission to move quickly to grant Vonage direct access to numbers so that these benefits can be realized by all of its subscribers.

B. The Report Shows that Direct Access to Numbers Has No Harmful Effect.

The Bureau recognizes what Vonage, other trial participants, and other interested parties have asserted from the very beginning of this process—direct access to numbers by interconnected VoIP providers has no harmful effects. Though some commenters had argued that direct access to numbers would impair routing, porting, and intercarrier compensation, the trial showed that those fears were unfounded. The Bureau’s Report also recognizes that, despite the hurdles CenturyLink placed in front of trial participants, Vonage had no difficulty exchanging TDM traffic with Verizon and AT&T through its CLEC partner.¹⁰ During and since the trial, Vonage routed calls successfully, Vonage ported numbers in and out successfully, and direct access did not impact terminating intercarrier compensation for calls originated from these numbers. Where Vonage did encounter problems, it was able to resolve them quickly without consumer impact.¹¹ In short, it was “business as usual” for routing, porting, and intercarrier compensation for Vonage as well as for the other trial participants.¹²

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* at ¶ 14 (noting that when a carrier was slow to enable direct porting to Vonage, Vonage completed its ports to and from that carrier through its carrier partner).

¹² *Id.* at ¶ 24. *See also* Letter from Joseph C. Cavender, Level 3 Communications, LLC, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 13-97 et al. (filed Dec. 13, 2013);

Furthermore, though Vonage and other trial participants were unable to reach a voluntary agreement with CenturyLink for the exchange of traffic, CenturyLink's negotiating posture need not, and should not, delay direct access. The trial demonstrates that other carriers are willing to move forward with IP interconnection, and the Commission should enable interconnected VoIP providers to capture these benefits even if some carriers are not ready to embrace efficient IP traffic exchange.

II. THE COMMISSION SHOULD ACT QUICKLY TO AMEND ITS NUMBERING RULES TO ALLOW ALL VOIP PROVIDERS DIRECT ACCESS TO NUMBERS.

The numbering trial—and this proceeding—is about a single, simple change: granting interconnected VoIP providers direct access to numbering resources, and the mechanisms supporting that change.¹³ Now that the trial has concluded, the data clearly show that direct access to numbers serves the public interest without adverse impact on consumers, providers, or the industry as a whole.

The Commission has already taken significant steps to address the myriad challenges arising from “the historic technology transitions that are transforming our nation’s voice communications services.”¹⁴ It should take another simple step here by immediately granting Vonage and others full access to numbering rights. Of course, there are ancillary issues that must be addressed in the broader context of the IP transition, but the Commission need not delay implementation of direct access to numbers by VoIP providers until resolution of those issues.

Letter from Duane Dyar, Vice President, Millicorp, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 13-97 et al. (filed Dec. 6, 2013); Letter from Kristin Manwarren, Counsel for Intelepeer, Inc., to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 13-97 et al. (filed Nov. 26, 2013); Letter from Randall B. Lowe, Attorney for SmartEdgeNet, LLC, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 13-97 et al. (filed Nov. 25, 2013).

¹³ See Reply Comments of Vonage Holdings Corp., WC Docket No. 13-97 et al., at 6 (filed Aug. 19, 2013).

¹⁴ *Technology Transitions Order* at ¶ 1.

That approach would hold progress hostage to contrived uncertainty. Indeed, the Bureau acknowledges that, for instance, though there may be “some confusion regarding parties’ rights and obligations with respect to porting and interconnection...these matters could be addressed in pending rulemakings addressing those topics.”¹⁵ The Bureau’s report is clear, in short, that there is no reason to delay direct access to numbering resources for interconnected VoIP providers.

III. THE COMMISSION SHOULD ACT QUICKLY IN RESPONSE TO THE TRIAL DATA.

Nearly a year ago, the Commission initiated a real-world trial of direct access to numbers by VoIP providers.¹⁶ Today, almost exactly nine years to the day that Vonage filed its initial petition for limited waiver,¹⁷ the Commission has concrete evidence from that trial showing that allowing interconnected VoIP providers to obtain numbers directly is not only technically feasible but also facilitates numerous long-term Commission goals. Armed with this data, the Commission should move forward quickly to expand numbering rights to all eligible interconnected VoIP providers.

In doing so, the Commission can show that, where it has solid information gleaned from trials, it is willing to use that information to advance the public interest. Thus, the Commission will soon be collecting trial data from voluntary experiments on the IP transition.¹⁸ In the Order kickstarting that process, the Commission acknowledges that it must “act with dispatch”¹⁹ and pledges to a “speedy review” of proposals,²⁰ acknowledging that moving quickly is critical to ensuring that the trials serve the purpose of “enhanc[ing] and accelerat[ing] the technology

¹⁵ *Numbering Report* at ¶ 1.

¹⁶ *Numbering Policies for Modern Communications, et al.*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Order, and Notice of Inquiry, FCC 13-51, 28 FCC Rcd. 5842 (2013).

¹⁷ Petition for Limited Waiver of Vonage Holdings Corp., CC Docket No. 99-200 (filed Mar. 4, 2005).

¹⁸ *See Technology Transitions Order*.

¹⁹ *Id.* at ¶ 2.

²⁰ *Id.* at ¶ 5.

transitions.”²¹ By acting quickly to adopt new and amended rules in *this* proceeding, the Commission will signal its readiness to do the same in other proceedings.

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Vonage thanks the Bureau for its careful and thorough review of the numbering trial, and Vonage is pleased that the Bureau’s Report concludes, correctly, that direct access to numbers by interconnected VoIP providers is technically feasible. Vonage encourages the Commission to act quickly, using this Report as its foundation, to adopt its proposed rule granting interconnected VoIP providers direct access to telephone numbers.

Respectfully submitted,



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²¹ *Id.* at ¶ 81.