AmericanFone

Glossary of Telecommunications Terms

1+ Service: The typical service provided by a customer's preferred interexchange carrier (see PIC), in which the customer need only dial 1 plus the 10-digit telephone number to make Long Distance calls.

Alternate Access Carriers: Local exchange carriers (see LEC) that compete directly with the regional Bell operating companies (see RBOCs). Normally found only in the larger metropolitan areas.

ANI: Automatic Number Identification: The originating local telephone number of the calling party. ANI may also be used to refer to any telephone number. On Long Distance calls, ANI is the process by which the local telephone company passes a caller's local billing telephone number to the Long Distance company when a 1+ or 10-XXX call is made.

Baby Bells: (See RBOCs.)

CLEC: Competitive Local Exchange Carrier. An alternate local exchange carrier (see LEC), such as a cable television provider or electric company.

CIR: Committed Information Rate. A specified amount of guaranteed bandwidth (measured in bits per second) on a frame relay service. Typically, when purchasing a frame relay service, a customer can specify a CIR level. The Frame Relay network vendor guarantees that frames not exceeding this level will be delivered. It's possible that additional traffic may also be delivered, but it's not guaranteed.

DNS: **Domain Name Service**. An Internet service that translates domain names into internet protocol addresses (see IP).

End Office: (See Local Exchange.)

Hub: A common connection point with multiple ports for devices in a network. Hubs are commonly used to connect segments of a local area network (see LAN). When a packet arrives at one port, it is copied to the other ports so that all segments of the LAN can see all packets.

IEC: Interexchange Carrier (also IXC or IC): A company providing Long Distance telephone service between local exchange carriers (see LEC) and local access transport areas (see LATA). IEC is the preferred acronym.

InterLATA: The services, revenues and functions that relate to telecommunications originating in one local access transport area (see LATA) and terminating in another local access transport area.

Interstate: Any telecommunications channel, facility or network that provides transmission between locations in two or more states. Interstate operation is regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

IntraLATA: The services, revenues and functions that relate to telecommunications originating and terminating within a single local access transport area. (See LATA.)

Intrastate: Any connection within a single state. Intrastate connections are regulated by each state's public utility commission.

IP: Internet Protocol. An internet protocol specifies the format of packets (also called datagrams) and the addressing scheme. Most networks combine internet protocol with a higher-level protocol called Transmission Control Protocol, or TCP, which establishes a virtual connection between a destination and a source.

IXC: Interexchange Carrier. (See IEC.)

LATA: Local Access and Transport Area. A geographic telecommunications service area. Long Distance service within a LATA is provided by the local exchange carrier (see LEC). Service between LATAs is provided by an interexchange carrier (see IEC). There are approximately 200 LATAs in the U.S. (See also InterLATA and IntraLATA.)

LAN: Local Area Network. A short-distance data communications network. LANs typically exist within a building or campus for linking together computers and peripherals under a standard protocol.

LAP: Local Access Provider. Any company that is authorized to provide local access. The organization may or may not be the local exchange carrier (see LEC).

LEC: Local Exchange Carrier. A company allowed to handle local telephone service following the breakup of AT&T (also known as the Bell System). These vary from Regional Bell Operating Companies (see RBOCs) to small independents.

Local Call: 1. A call destination that is within the local area of the switching system serving the calling station. 2. A telephone call within the specified local calling area of the telephone exchange. 3. A call that incurs no charges.

Local Exchange: The switching center where a customer's lines terminate (also known as the end office). (See also LEC.)

PIC: Primary Interexchange Carrier: A customer's first choice provider of Long Distance service. The interexchange carrier (see IEC) designated by the customer provides service between local access and transport areas (see InterLATA) automatically when the customer dials 1 plus the 10-digit telephone number. (Also known as Primary InterLATA Carrier and Presubscribed Interexchange Carrier.)

PIC Charges: A charge for changing the PIC. Often paid by the new interexchange carrier (see IEC). If a local exchange carrier (see LEC) sends a PIC charge to a customer, the new interexchange carrier will typically credit the customer's account.

PIC Freeze: A service provided by a local exchange carrier (see LEC) wherein a "freeze" is placed on a customer's phone line preventing the unauthorized switching of their Long Distance service. New customers to AmericanFone must ask their local exchange carrier to remove any PIC Freezes before their service can be switched. Once the service is switched, we recommend reinstating the PIC freeze.

POS: **Packet-over-SONET**. (See SONET.)

Presubscribed Interexchange Carrier. (See PIC.)

Primary InterLATA Carrier: (See PIC.)

PVC: **Permanent Virtual Circuit**. A connection between two devices that acts as though it is a direct connection, though it may physically be circuitous. The term is used most frequently to describe connections between two hosts in a packet-switching network.

RBOCs: Regional Bell Operating Companies. Regional telephone companies created as the result of the U.S. antitrust action against AT&T in 1983 (see LEC). Also known as the "Baby Bells," the original seven companies have since merged into four: SBC Communications, Verizon, Qwest and BellSouth.

Slamming: The unauthorized switching of a customer's Long Distance service by a rival provider.

SONET: **Synchronous Optical Network**. A standard for connecting fiber-optic transmission systems. The SONET format allows different formats to be transmitted on one line, and consists of several optical interface layers: path layer, line layer, section layer and photonic layer.