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Industry Leaders Join Forces to Promote Awareness for Consumer Internet Voice Services

Washington, D.C. — November 3, 2005 — A group of the country's leading Internet voice providers today announced a new initiative to raise awareness and help educate consumers about the benefits of voice services delivered over the Internet. The initiative, known as the Internet Voice Campaign, is part of The VON Coalition (www.von.org), and its mission is to increase adoption and usage of voice over IP (VoIP).

Founding members of the Internet Voice Campaign include EarthLink (Nasdaq: ELNK), Google, Level 3, Pulver.com, Skype, Sonus Networks (Nasdaq: SONS) and USA Datanet.

“Internet voice services are now opening a whole new frontier in communications, with the potential to dramatically change the way we connect with family, friends and colleagues. However, too few consumers today are aware of the power and potential of Internet voice communication,” said Jim Kohlenberger, executive director of The VON Coalition. “The VON Coalition has been at the forefront of educating policymakers about the benefits of Internet voice innovations. Now, we want to help educate consumers about the new services, increased choices, better prices and improved features that the Internet can deliver. By working together, we hope we can encourage more Americans to take full advantage of Internet voice services.”

The member companies seek to increase the popularity of Internet voice services by helping mainstream consumers take advantage of the same features that early adopters of this technology now enjoy. Today, many consumers are not aware that VoIP is a reliable, low-cost alternative to traditional phone service and can serve as a gateway that integrates the Internet, e-mail, instant messaging and voice calling.

According to the May 2005 Telecommunications Report by Harris Interactive, attitudes and misperceptions prevent many consumers from adopting VoIP services. Key findings of the survey reveal that:

- Among consumers who are aware of Internet voice, 36 percent don't use the service because they don't know enough about it;
- 38 percent don't use it because voice over Internet providers have failed to show a convincing story;
- 38 percent are waiting for Internet voice to become more mainstream;
- 23 percent said recommendations would help them move toward Internet voice, according to the survey.

Other barriers to Internet voice adoption include questions about 911 support issues; privacy and security; power failures and call quality.

By addressing these issues, the Internet Voice Campaign aims to educate consumers about the benefits of using the Internet for phone calls, instant messaging and other advanced telephone functions, and dispel misperceptions. As initial actions, the Campaign will conduct a survey later this year and begin a consumer awareness campaign that articulates the benefits and features of Internet voice coupled with consumer messages about cost and ease of use. The survey will reach beyond simple

awareness of voice to find out what types of services and products consumers would want to see offered through an Internet voice service.

Organizations interested in joining the Internet Voice Campaign should e-mail jkohlenberger@cox.net, or call The VON Coalition at 703-237-2357.

Comments

“Voice over IP has the potential to revolutionize the way we all communicate, providing high-quality, low-cost alternatives to traditional phone lines,” said Steve Howe, vice president of Voice, EarthLink. “With this collaboration, we are declaring: the time for Internet voice is now, and consumers need to know the benefits and innovative services that voice over IP can provide.”

“As a wholesale network enabler to 8 of the top 10 VoIP service providers, Level 3 has a vested interest in the successful adoption of VoIP,” said Charles Meyers, group vice president for Level 3. “We recognize that in order to drive mass market adoption, we need to work cooperatively to raise awareness and educate consumers on the benefits of IP telephony.”

“Not only will IP technology advance the types and quality of services available to consumers, but IP technology will dramatically advance the social good, by offering consumers next generation emergency response capabilities, disabilities access alternatives, and the advantages that come from combining voice, video, data, text, and presence applications that users may control themselves,” said Jonathan Askin, general counsel, Pulver.com.

“Internet voice communications, like e-mail and instant messaging before it, will revolutionize the way people communicate,” said Christopher Libertelli, director, Government and Regulatory Affairs at Skype. “Skype is excited to participate in this industry effort to educate consumers about the many benefits of voice over IP.”

“With broadband deployment continuing to rise, service providers are in a stronger position than ever before to deliver high quality, easy to use, innovative new services that improve the way consumers communicate,” said Hassan Ahmed, chairman and CEO, Sonus Networks. “We’re proud to join forces with other leaders in the industry

to promote awareness for the distinct advantages that IP-based network architectures enable.”

“USA Datanet is proud to join forces with the other founding members of the VON Coalition’s Internet Voice Campaign,” said David Montanaro, chairman and CEO of USA Datanet. “As we have rolled out broadband telephony services to consumers over the past year, our customers are telling us quite a bit about the value of the extended features, new functionality and lifestyle enhancements of voice over IP that go well beyond the initial benefits of choice and lower costs,” Montanaro noted. “We look forward to working with these and other industry leaders to further educate consumers about the extraordinary benefits yet to come.”

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For more information, press only:
The Internet Voice Campaign, 212-871-3950