INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

ITU-T   E.104

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TELEPHONE NETWORK AND ISDN

OPERATION, NUMBERING, ROUTING
AND MOBILE SERVICE

INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE SERVICE AND PUBLIC ACCESS

ITU-T Recommendation E.104

(Previously "CCITT Recommendation")

FOREWORD

The ITU-T (Telecommunication Standardization Sector) is a permanent organ of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The ITU-T is responsible for studying technical, operating and tariff questions and issuing Recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Conference (WTSC), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU-T Study Groups which, in their turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

The approval of Recommendations by the Members of the ITU-T is covered by the procedure laid down in WTSC Resolution No. 1 (Helsinki, March 1-12, 1993).

ITU-T Recommendation E.104 was prepared by ITU-T Study Group 1 (1993-1996) and was approved under the WTSC Resolution No. 1 procedure on the 21st of February 1995.

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NOTE

In this Recommendation, the expression "Administration" is used for conciseness to indicate both a telecommunication administration and a recognized operating agency.

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SUMMARY

This Recommendation gives an overview of methods and general principles to be followed in organizing an International Telephone Directory Assistance Service.

INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE SERVICE
AND PUBLIC ACCESS

(Geneva, 1994)

1 Introduction

The exchange of information relating to lists of subscribers within the international service is becoming increasingly intensive given the growth of international traffic and the increase in the number of people travelling abroad (business, tourism, etc.).

To facilitate customers' use of international telephone network ROAs should provide an International Telephone Directory Assistance Service.

2 Scope

This Recommendation gives an overview of methods and general principles to be followed on organizing an International Telephone Directory Assistance Service.

3 Methods of obtaining information

The method to be followed in providing the customers and operators in one country with information of the national significant telephone numbers (as specified in Recommendation E.160) of subscribers in another country, depends on:

– the way the information service is organized in the country of destination, distance between the countries, operating procedures, etc.;

– the improvement and rationalization, sought by several ROAs for their national and international information services.

The operator in the country of origin dealing with international inquiries should be able to obtain information, depending on the organization of the inquiry service in each country, by one of the following methods:

a) from telephone directories (see Recommendation E.114);

b) from other information systems received from foreign ROAs and kept up to date (e.g. microfiches);

c) by calling the appropriate information service operator in the country of destination (see Recommendation E.141):

– outgoing operators should, where language and other conditions permit, have direct access to the appropriate foreign information centre(s) which hold, or are able to obtain from other centres, up-to-date information;

– where language and other conditions do not permit the outgoing operator to have direct access to the appropriate foreign information centre, the outgoing operator should call the operator in the appropriate international exchange of the country of destination;

– where a ROA has distributed its information service to a number of information centres, provision should be made for access to a centralized international information centre or assistance operator in case the originating operator encounters language or other difficulties;

d) by having access to foreign information service computers (see Recommendation E.115):

– either via a local computer using appropriate procedures; or

– in special circumstances, via direct access using dedicated or switched connections.

4 General principles applicable to the various methods of obtaining information

In any relation, ROAs should abide by the following general principles:

a) Inquiries from customers concerning foreign subscribers' numbers should normally be addressed to operators in the country of origin who will obtain the required information; it may be useful to keep the customer on line while this information is being sought.

b) In order to give operators in the country of origin ready access to the international telephone inquiry services in other countries, it is desirable that ROAs, in conformity with Recommendation E.149, provide common routing codes or abbreviated access numbers to the foreign computerized or manual telephone inquiry services.

   ROAs should not communicate these access numbers to their subscribers.

c) Subscribers in one country may be permitted to have access to the information service in another country subject to bilateral agreement between the ROAs concerned.

d) An international system should be able to provide:

   – for the desired correspondent: his international number;

   – for the locality in which this correspondent resides: the country code and the national destination code;

   – special numbers for other services.

e) No secret numbers should be issued.

5 Charging and accounting

The provisions concerning charging and accounting for the International Telephone Directory Assistance Service, if any, may be found in the D-Series Recommendations.

6 Quality of service

Quality of service involves a large number of different aspects, seen as well from the customers' side as from the ROA side. All of these different aspects/factors have an impact on the result which is presented to the customers. Some factors are:

– An accurate answer to the customer, i.e. that a correct number is retrieved. This can involve difficulty, because sometimes the customer does not know the exact wording, locality name, etc., of the wanted company/person.

– A multiplication of the different types of telecommunication numbers, i.e. telephone, mobile, fax, MHS, different ROAs. The calling customer may even not know to which ROA network the wanted person/company is connected.

– A quick answer, that means that the average dialogue time between the customer and the operator must be treated with acceptable duration.

– An acceptable average answering time when the customer calls the service provider.

– Expectations of follow-on services.

– ROAs costs for the service must match economical possibilities.

– A reasonable answering time in the different computer systems involved in the service.

– Feedback functions of different types between ROAs concerned.

Awaiting standards to be set, every ROA must provide:

– a technical fault report point, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;

– an operator assistance point available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;

– an administrative report point, available normal office opening hours;

– a computer response time and computer up-time that does not differ significantly from standards used in domestic service.