



# Internet Telephony Service Providers Association

## Press Release

### ITSPA cautiously optimistic about Ofcom's VoIP approach

*London. Wednesday, 22nd February 2006*

**ITSPA, the UK's Internet Telephony Services Providers Association, welcomes Ofcom's continued positive commitment to the development of VoIP, as set out in the consultation on the Regulation of VoIP. However, concerns remain that excessive regulation could stifle the sector and ultimately limit consumers' power of choice.**

After many months of discussion with Ofcom, ITSPA is pleased that a full consultation on the regulation of VoIP has been launched, which places the consumer at the heart of the debate and seeks to bring clarity to the market. ITSPA believes that VoIP will deliver increasing consumer choice and new innovative features, and supports Ofcom's consumer-oriented approach.

In addition, ITSPA recognises that Ofcom has proposed that many of the foundations for the success of VoIP Providers are maintained, such as access to geographic numbering, number portability and an appropriate level of network integrity requirements. ITSPA also notes Ofcom's comments on naked-DSL and will be furthering its work to bring a naked-DSL product to market.

ITSPA appreciates Ofcom's position with regard to the sensitive issue of access to emergency services and the need to ensure the safety of citizens through regulation. ITSPA remains committed to ensuring consumers are fully informed about the benefits and capabilities of VoIP and has been working hard over the last 18 months to ensure consumers are aware of the differences between VoIP and legacy telephony services. It should also be noted that the UK is a pioneer in solutions for emergency access via new technologies.

However, ITSPA has some concerns about the proposals for full regulation of other areas of consumer information, such as number portability.

Eli Katz, ITSPA Chair said "The UK has become a hotbed for the development of VoIP and this is in no small part due to the light touch interim approach that Ofcom put in place in September 2004. ITSPA is therefore concerned that proposals to regulate all consumer information requirements could reverse this trend and shrink the range of innovative services currently on offer to consumers. The VoIP sector would seem to be an ideal opportunity for Ofcom to deliver on one of its key principles of 'least intrusive regulatory mechanisms'<sup>[1]</sup>, especially as the ITSPA Code of Practice mandates many of these same issues on a self-regulatory basis".

The specific detail of the consultation will provide a number of issues for the VoIP industry to discuss. ITSPA looks forward to fully contributing to the consultation process over the coming weeks and continuing its work with Ofcom, consumers and other stakeholders to help the UK become a global leader in IP communications.

<sup>[1]</sup> Ofcom's Regulatory Principles, <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/about/sdrp/>

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**Notes to Editors Follows:**

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### **About VoIP**

Internet Telephony is the ability to make voice calls over any Internet connection, particularly broadband, using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). Internet Telephony Service Providers can provide regular and enhanced phone line services – at reduced cost – with calls to other Internet phones often free of charge.

### **About ITSPA**

ITSPA (Internet Telephony Services Providers' Association – <http://www.itspa.org.uk>) was established in 2004 and represents the UK's VoIP industry. ITSPA aims to encourage the development of a competitive VoIP market that delivers a real choice of communications services to all citizens. ITSPA promotes effective self-regulation and the delivery of a level-playing field for all market players in next generation communications.

A full list of ITSPA's 46 members can be found on ITSPA's website here: <http://www.itspa.org.uk/members.htm>

For further information, please contact Clare Seabourne, ITSPA Secretariat, [secretariat@itspa.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@itspa.org.uk) (020 7043 7770).

### **About the Consultation on the Regulation of VoIP**

Ofcom's consultation on the regulation of VoIP was published on 22 February 2006 and can be found here: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/voipregulation/>

### **About Naked-DSL**

Naked-DSL is a product that would allow a consumer to take-up a broadband service without also having to pay for the standard telephone line rental.