

- 1. Access Line:** Communications circuit or channel connecting end-user equipment to a carrier central office, wire center or other access port. (see also Frame-Relay Access Line)
- 2. ATM:** Asynchronous Transfer Mode — high-bandwidth packet-like switching and multiplexing for transmission of 53-byte fixed-sized cells.
- 3. Automatic Number Identification:** Caller ID.
- 4. Bandwidth:** Capacity of a communications circuit or channel. In analog facilities, greater bandwidth means the facility carries broader frequency range without significant distortion (hence, the term “broadband” for such facilities). In digital facilities, greater bandwidth translates to greater throughput of digital transmission (e.g., 56 kbps vs. 128 kbps). In both analog and digital, greater bandwidth indicates the facility carries more communications in a given time period.
- 5. Billing Increment:** Minimum unit of billing for communications time, e.g. if billing is in one-minute increments, any usage from 1-60 seconds is charged for one full minute, usage from 61-120 seconds is charged for two full minutes, etc. As a rule of thumb, for each call you pay for average unused time equal to about half the billing increment. The amount of billable unused time declines as the billing increment declines (e.g., from one minute to six seconds).
- 6. Broadband:** Transmission facility with bandwidth greater than one voice-grade channel (4 kHz for analog; 56/64 kbps for digital).
- 7. Browser:** Software program that interfaces with the World Wide Web. It interprets hypertext links and facilitates searching the internet, usually integrating various internet applications and services. The most widely used are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.
- 8. Burstible T1:** Arrangement in which full T1 bandwidth is available when needed, with usage-based billing up to 1.544 mbps, as used.
- 9. Business Line:** Circuit connecting the LEC central office (brings dial-tone) to key telephone equipment or single-line devices (telephones, fax machines, modems, etc.) for business-class switched services. Also, a class of service assigned to a channel carried via a circuit between the LEC CO and such equipment.
- 10. Busy Hour:** The 60-minutes in a defined period (usually a day) during which a telecom facility carries its highest level of traffic.
- 11. Cable Modem:** Device connected between a coaxial cable and a digital data device to transform signals to and from digital/analog. Cable modems can handle the multi-megabit bandwidths available with internet access via cable-TV facilities.
- 12. Call Block:** Lets a user prevent calls from specific numbers from seizing a specific line.
- 13. Caller ID:** Shows the called party the telephone number/address of an incoming call.
- 14. Call Waiting:** Signals a user during a call that another caller is attempting to get through.
- 15. Central Office:** Telephone company facility or equipment for switching and routing telephone calls.
- 16. Centrex:** Class of business services bundling many special capabilities into a single plan, usually by partitioning a segment of the CO switch to function as the subscriber’s PBX. Simple plans may add a package of specialized capabilities to standard business lines. Other plans provide direct dialing from outside telephones to internal station numbers, intercommunications, and other functions without complex customer-premises equipment.
- 17. Channel Bank:** Multiplexer combining up to 24 analog voice and/or synchronous data channels into a DS1 format. Channel banks also digitize analog signals using pulse code modulation (PCM).
- 18. Circuit:** Dedicated facility (electrical wire, optical fiber, radio, etc.) between or among communications points. Circuits often provide a single communications channel (e.g. ordinary lines and trunks), or they may carry multiple channels (for example ISDN and T1 circuits).
- 19. Circuit Switching:** Process of switching entire end-to-end paths to complete a connection between caller and called end. For the duration of the call, the path is dedicated to that call.
- 20. Class of Service:** Specific capabilities, features, authorizations, limitations, etc. assigned to a particular telephone station or telephone service.
- 21. CLEC:** Competitive Local Exchange Carrier. Any telecom company offering service in a specific area. CLECs may be resellers of ILEC services, or have their own facilities (facilities-based).
- 22. Co-Location:** separate competitive telecommunications switching facilities (such as ILEC and CLEC) physically located on the same premises and interconnected.
- 23. Committed Information Rate:** Minimum rate (in bits or kilobits per second) at which the rated frame-relay component transfers information under normal conditions.
- 24. Common Carrier:** Entity that rents the availability of its facilities to the general public. Communications common carriers include local and long-distance telephone, cellular, paging, PCS, maritime, radio and satellite companies.
- 25. Common Channel Signaling System 7:** Signaling System 7.
- 26. Common Language Location Identifier:** 11-character alphanumeric code identifying telecom wire centers and other buildings.
- 27. Cramping:** The practice of adding unauthorized services like toll-free numbers, internet access or voice mail to your bill.
- 28. Dedicated Access:** Full-period private circuit between a service provider and user. (Compare; switched access.)
- 29. Demarc:** Point on user premises separating phone company facilities from customer facilities.
- 30. Dial Tone Line:** Circuit connecting LEC central office (brings dial-tone) to user equipment for business or residential-class switched services.
- 31. DID:** Direct-Inward-Dialing – Class of business service enabling direct dialing from outside telephones to internal station numbers via special trunks and customer-premises equipment.
- 32. Digital Subscriber Line:** Technology transmitting simultaneous voice and data at up to multi-megabit speeds, over twisted-pair copper phone wires.
- 33. xDSL:** The general family of DSL services.
- 34. Domain:** Part of an internet website address following “www” or the part of an email address after the “@.”
- 35. Downstream:** Transmission of signals from a main computer/node to a remote point.
- 36. DS0:** Digital Standard 0 (zero) — Defines the characteristics for circuits and associated equipment providing two-way digital transmission at 64 kilobits per second.
- 37. DS1:** Digital Standard 1 — Defines characteristics for circuits and associated equipment providing that two-way digital transmission at 1.544 megabits per second, often time-division multiplexed into 24 voice-grade channels of 64 kilobits per second.
- 38. DS3:** Digital Standard 3 — Defines characteristics of circuits and associated equipment providing two-way digital transmission at 44.736 megabits per second, often time-division multiplexed into 672 voice-grade channels of 64 kilobits per second.
- 39. E1:** Carrier system transferring digital signals at 2.048 megabits per second, providing 32 64-kbps channels. Used in Europe instead of T1.
- 40. Erlang:** Basic unit in traffic analysis; one hour of traffic during the busiest hour of the analysis period.
- 41. Firewall:** Provision protecting a networked server from unauthorized access, usually using software-based protection, e.g. defensive coding.
- 42. Flat-rate service:** Local-calling plan allowing unlimited local calling at no additional charges.
- 43. Fractional T1:** Service bandwidth less than T1/DS1 but greater than voice grade. Usually comes in multiples of 64 kbps from 128 kbps to 768 kbps.
- 44. Frame Relay:** System of multiplexed data communications among widely-dispersed sites using specified virtual circuits based on the CCITT Q.922A standard for frame format.
- 45. FX Line:** Line or trunk connecting customer equipment with a LEC central office in a foreign exchange, thereby providing direct access to the foreign local calling area. (Also: a line or trunk connecting to a foreign central office.)
- 46. Grade of Service:** Proportion of initial call attempts, during the busy hour, that may experience a block or busy condition. GOS is normally expressed as a decimal (one blocked or busy call out of 100 initial attempts = P.01).

- 47. ILEC:** Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier — the company franchised as the provider of local telephone services in a defined territory in 1996 (or earlier). Often a former Bell company. Today ILECs include Verizon, BellSouth, Qwest and SBC.
- 48. Interexchange:** Calls, facilities and services involving more than one telephone exchange area. Communications between points in different exchanges.
- 49. Interlata:** Calls between points in different LATAs. May be interstate or intrastate.
- 50. International Telecommunications Union:** — (Formerly CCITT). Devises and recommends standards for international telecommunications.
- 51. Internet Access:** Facility used to connect to the internet. May be regular telephone lines (i.e. “dial-up” access), ISDN circuits, DSL services, T1s, etc.
- 52. Internet Protocol:** Standard for routing within interconnected packet-switched computer networks. Transmits blocks of data from source to destination hosts identified by fixed-length addresses.
- 53. Internet Service Provider:** Entity providing specialized access to the Internet. ISP services may include email service/addresses, domain names, web hosting and wideband connections.
- 54. Intralata:** local toll or regional long distance. Calls between two points within a LATA. Most, but not all, LATAs are entirely within a single state.
- 55. Kbps:** Kilobits per second — Measure of data transmission throughput (“speed”). One kbps is 1,000 bits per second.
- 56. Key System:** Telephone system providing access to multiple lines in which each line appears at a button on the telephone. Calls are received or made by selecting the button for the appropriate line.
- 57. LATA:** Local Access Transport Area — Area within which long-distance calls may be handled by LECs. Often called “local-toll” or “regional” calling areas. The US is divided into 198 LATAs.
- 58. Local Area Network:** Network of interconnected data communications devices generally located within the confines of a single user premises or campus.
- 59. Local Exchange Area:** Area within which calls are treated as local calls.
- 60. Local Loop:** Circuit between phone service provider’s central office and user premises. Provides access to services, from POTS to high-speed data access.
- 61. LPIC:** Lata Primary Intraexchange Carrier — Designation applied to each telephone number determining which long-distance company will handle intralata 1+ calls dialed on that line. (LPICs can be overridden in various ways, for example by dialing ‘1010+++’ before a long-distance call.)
- 62. Mbps:** Megabits per second — Measure of data transmission throughput (“speed”). Each mbps is 1,000,000 bits per second.
- 63. Measured-rate service:** Local calling plan that bills for each completed outgoing local call, based on call duration and distance between calling points.
- 64. Message-rate service:** Local-calling plan that bills for each completed outgoing local call. An allowance of local calls at no additional charge may be included. After any monthly allowance is used, a charge is made for each additional local call, regardless of duration.
- 65. Multiplexer:** Combines individual digital channels into a single data stream for transmission over a single network circuit. Time division multiplexing (TDM) is used for DS+ standards.
- 66. Numbering Plan Area:** Geographical area in which telephone numbers are preceded by a common area code. Often used interchangeably with “area code.”
- 67. NXX:** 3-digit exchange part of a phone number.
- 68. Packet Switching:** Process of guiding small bundles of information bytes (“packets”) through a network so all information intended for a given transmission eventually arrives at the intended destination for assembly into the original message.
- 69. PBX:** Private Branch Exchange — system of telephones that gives station users access to many internal and external lines from one telephone set.
- 70. Permanent Virtual Connection:** Frame relay or X.25 logical link where originating and terminating endpoints and class of service are defined by network management.
- 71. PIC:** Primary Interexchange Code — Designation applied to each phone number that determines which long distance company handles interlata 1+ calls. (PICs can be overridden, e.g. dialing ‘1010+++’ before a long-distance call.)
- 72. PICC:** Primary Interexchange Carrier Charge — Former monthly fee to LECs to carry LD calls on their lines. Since merged with USF into new charge.
- 73. PIC Freeze:** Anti-slamming mechanism assuring no change to your long-distance company can be made by anyone but you. (Also *PIC Lock*).
- 74. Point of Presence:** Physical place within a LATA where a long distance carrier interfaces with the LEC. May be a central office (CO) or wire center (WC).
- 75. POTS:** “Plain Old Telephone Service” — Usually, a single dial-tone line.
- 76. Primary-Rate Interface:** 23B+D ISDN service, including 23 64-kbps bearer channels and one 64-kbps data channel on a DS1 local-loop circuit. (In Europe, PRI consists of 30B + D.)
- 77. Private Line:** A full-period circuit between two or more points for the exclusive (constant, if needed) use of the subscriber. (compare, switched services)
- 78. PSTN:** Public Switched Telephone Network.
- 79. PTT:** Post Telephone & Telegraph administration — government-owned or controlled telephone company in many countries outside the U.S.
- 80. RBOC:** Regional Bell Operating Company ¼ the original 7 RBOCs formed from the 1983 breakup of AT&T - now Bell South, Qwest, SBC and Verizon.
- 81. Router:** Equipment that routes data to and from a local area network on the Level-3 LAN protocol (OSI Layer 3, e.g., the IP address). Routers also act as traffic cops, allowing only authorized machines to transmit data into the local network so private information remains secure. In addition to supporting dial-in and leased connections, routers also handle errors and security issues and keep network usage statistics.
- 82. SCP:** Service Control Point.
- 83. Signaling System 7:** Out-of-band signaling protocol used by public switched telephone networks.
- 84. Slamming:** Changing the long-distance service without authorization.
- 85. SONET:** Synchronous Optical NETwork — the North American standard for interface parameters; rates, formats, multiplexing methods; and administration, maintenance, and provisioning for high-speed transmission of bits information in laser-light streams.
- 86. Switched Service:** Long-distance service provided via local switched-access circuit(s).
- 87. Switched Virtual Circuit:** Virtual circuit connection established across a network on an as-needed basis that lasts only for the duration of the data session (call).
- 88. Switched Access:** Circuit between the user and LEC enabling calling to and from all telephone subscribers. (Compare: dedicated access.)
- 89. Transmission Control Protocol:** Connection-oriented, full-duplex, host-to-host protocol which breaks data into packets for routing over packet-switched computer networks; corresponds to OSI Layer 4 (transport layer).
- 90. Trunk:** Circuit engineered to connect the LEC central office (bring dial-tone) to a PBX telephone system for business-class switched services. Also, a class of service assigned to a channel carried via a circuit between the LEC CO and such equipment.
- 91. USF:** Universal Service Fund — Financial mechanism that helps compensate phone companies for providing access to telecom service at reasonable and affordable rates across the country, including rural, insular and high cost areas and to public institutions.
- 92. Virtual Circuit:** Voice or data communications link that appears to the user to be a dedicated point-to-point circuit but is not a fixed physical circuit. A virtual circuit is referred to as a logical, rather than physical, call path. (Also “virtual connection.”)
- 93. Virtual Private Network:** Voice or data service using public network facilities to emulate a private-line network. Voice VPNs are provided by AT&T (SDN), MCI (V-Net) and Sprint (VPN) for very large customers. Data VPNs use VANs and the Internet for very small to very large users, often maintaining security with tunneling protocols.
- 94. Wire Center:** Location where an IXC or LEC operates testing facilities to maintain subscribers’ local lines /trunks/circuits. Wire centers are often in class-5 central offices, but not always.