

Number Portability for Caribbean Markets

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What is Number Portability?

Definition

- Allows the subscriber to retain their number when switching from one service provider to another

Different types of Number Portability –

- **Location-based:** One geographical area to another.
- **Operator-based:** Mobile to Mobile or Fixed to Fixed
- **Service-based:** Different mobile technologies — GSM to CDMA
- **Convergence-based:** Fixed to mobile telephony.

Focus for this discussion is Operator Based number portability

The Case for Number Portability

Flexibility and Convenience

Benefits to the Customer:

- **Flexibility** – freedom to change service provider if customer so desires e.g. for better value
- **Convenience** - the consumer is able to keep their telephone number if they choose to change their service provider
- No dislocation due to loss of contact (critical for business customers)
- Geographic portability allows fixed line customers can maintain their number wherever they move to within the country

Savings

Benefits to the Customer:

- **Saving** – reduces the initial cost of switching service provider
 - mobile customers have to purchase new handsets
 - Even in context of subsidized handsets, customer pays cost in minute charges
- Business customers do not need to incur cost to reprint stationery and other advertising material

Industry Benefits

Benefits to the Industry:

- Allows level playing field for all market participants
- Increased competition leading to price reductions
- Service innovations
- Supports additional market entrants

Societal Benefits

Benefits to the Society:

- More efficient use of a finite national resource
- Stimulates innovation and **employment**
- Reduced impact of e-waste through less
 - Mobile handsets
 - Marketing materials
 - Telephone Directory

Successful adaptation of Number Portability requires:

- Strong Regulation and Performance metric's with strict enforcement of the NP process
- Highly automated central systems - < 4 days to switch and <2 hours on-line
- Independent "Numbering Company" which seeks minimum ROE.
- Forced obligation for all local Carriers

Status Update: A few examples

COUNTRY	Status Number Portability (NP)
Trinidad & Tobago	Requirement of Telecoms Act & TATT has completed first phase of industry consultation on implementation plan for NP
Jamaica	Completed cost benefit analysis which will form basis of public consultation, to be followed by decision on NP
Panama	Plans to implement fixed and mobile NP Fixed currently available via call forwarding method

Success Examples

Mature Markets

Degree of Portability Uptake

- France: 1.8%
- Switzerland: 6.5%
- Italy: 12.8%
- Belgium: 17.4%
- USA: 22.9%
- Germany: 1.3%
- Netherlands: 11.3%
- Sweden: 14.6%
- Finland: 58.4%

Recent Implementation

- **Ireland (June 2003):** 2.1M ports in 7 years out of 4.6M base
- **Romania (Jan 2009):** 25,000 requests in 2 months
- **Brazil (Jan 2010):** 4.52M people requested to switch out of 210M lines
- **India Feb (2011):** Launched nation-wide rollout of MNP to 700M subscribers

Impediments to Implementation

- a **political game** by the carriers to hold their customers hostage
- No consumer data to determine “propensity to port”
- Regulatory ownership, resources and expertise to manage
- Cost implications for providers
 - Infrastructure enhancements
 - Technical implementation and support costs

Thank You