

# PERSPECTIVES

ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APCC®

November 2008

Volume 16

Number 6



## Board games

Test your skills – see if you know the answers to these Protel questions



Payphone211.com

Presents...

# Revenue Increasing Services

**GOT TALENT?**  
GET DISCOVERED TODAY!  
FOR \$1  
Dial \*89  
from this payphone!

Callers Evaluated  
Music - Rap - Comedy

Visit  
www.payphoneidol.com

**TALENT AUDITION**  
Caller has the opportunity to audition and the opportunity to win \$1,000.  
www.payphoneidol.com

**ENCONTRE MI TRABAJO AQUI!**  
**POR \$1 ESTE TELEFONO**

- Construccion
- Jardinevia
- Mundaza
- Restaurante
- Limpieza de Casa

Marque \*83

Visit  
www.payphonejobs.com

**JOB BOARDS**  
Day laborers are interviewed and profile is placed on the web site. They will pay \$1 per month.  
www.payphonejobs.com

**\$1 SING A GRAM**  
From This Phone Dial \*86

OR

Visit  
www.songbyphone.com

**SING-A-GRAM**  
A one-of-kind telephone greeting message delivery system.  
www.songbyphone.com  
Demo 1-888-565-7565

**Apartment For RENT**

Dial \* 83  
Free Call  
www.listmyapartment.com  
List Your Apartment Here for \$2

1-800-347-0102  
It will reach hundreds of payphone location

**APARTMENTS FOR RENT**  
Allows properties to be posted and allows apartment hunters to listen to available rentals by distance.

**YOUR AD HERE**

Go To  
www.payphoneads.com

**YOUR ADS HERE**  
Allows people to reserve a specific phone for advertisement

## National Corporate Advertisement Coming Soon



Text **JOBS** to 82646  
**NEW REVENUE STREAM**

Users can now pay using CELL PHONE through a short code campaign.

For More Information Go To [www.payphoneads.com](http://www.payphoneads.com)

**AUTO 211**  
AUTOMATED PAYPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE  
Top Level 211 Customer Service

**PSP GLOBAL.COM**  
INTERNATIONAL DIRECT DIAL  
Industry Leading Features/Fraud Prevention

Other services from 211

SERVICING OVER  
200,000 ANIS  
NATIONWIDE



PAYPHONE211.COM

2337 Foothill Blvd. #812, La Verne, CA 91750 • 1-866-432-2739 • 626-963-9190

Fax 626-963-0832 • E-mail: [sales@payphone211.com](mailto:sales@payphone211.com) • [www.payphone211.com](http://www.payphone211.com)

A Payphone211.com Product

In association with Alliance Telemedia, Inc. Patent pending.

**PSP INFO TECH.**

MULTITEST FIELD TOOL  
6 Tests In 20 Seconds



PAYPHONE SIGNAGE SOLUTIONS

Promote Calling Programs

# Lock Down Your Profits



Are you aware that the average county jail\* bills over \$750 per phone per month in collect & credit card calls?

\* City and county jails, half-way houses, work-release facilities and juvenile detention centers.

NCIC has developed a proprietary inmate platform that allows payphone providers to easily become inmate telephone providers. By simply placing a coinless payphone into the local jails or allowing NCIC to provide you with VOIP equipment you can tap into the inmate telephone market with no investment.

### NCIC provides:

- The best web presence and obtains the leads for our customers
- The largest collect billing footprint in the operator service industry
- Credit card collect to cell phones
- Easy-to-use web reporting customizable for you and the jail
- International collect calling to Mexico, Canada and other countries
- In-house customer service 24/7
- A bi-lingual call center

### Features & Benefits:

- No expensive on-site equipment
- Call recordings with web access
- Personal Identification Numbers (PINs)
- Detailed call reports
- Multiple language support
- Live and automated operator services
- Live monitoring via web interface
- Asterisk based VOIP platform developed by in-house engineers.
- VOIP interface allowing up to 24 phones per single DSL line
- Prepaid collect and prepaid PINs

Don't Miss Another Day!

Call us now at 888.686.3699

or email us at [info@ncic.com](mailto:info@ncic.com)



**NCIC Operator Services**

606 E. Magrill St. • Longview, TX 75601 • Fax: 903.757.4899

[www.ncic.com](http://www.ncic.com)

**ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SOMETHING NEW & PROMISING?  
THEN...LOOK NO FURTHER.**

A really exciting new product was unveiled recently at the APCC 2008 Expo in Las Vegas. If you missed seeing it there, don't miss this opportunity to check it out now for yourself.

**INTRODUCING...**

**THE PREPAID PHONE CARD MACHINE  
WITH PROMOTIONAL SWEEPSTAKES**

**HOW IT WORKS**

- WITH NO INVESTMENT OR COST TO YOU OR THE PREMISE OWNER—WE SUPPLY A MACHINE WORTH OVER \$15,000 THAT VENDS \$1/\$5/\$10/\$20 PHONE CARDS (IN PIN SLIP FORMAT) VIA A TOUCH SCREEN KIOSK
- WE PAY YOU TO INSTALL THE MACHINE(S) AT QUALIFYING LOCATIONS
- IN ADDITION TO 5 MINUTES OF TALK TIME ON EACH \$1 PHONE CARD, THE PURCHASER ALSO RECEIVES AN AUTOMATIC SWEEPSTAKES ENTRY—AND A REAL TIME VISUAL DISPLAY OF WHETHER THE ENTRY IS A WINNER OR LOSER (SWEEPSTAKES ARE LIMITED TO \$1 CARDS ONLY)
- THE LOCATION MUST QUALIFY FOR PLACEMENT OF THE MACHINE BY SHOWING: INTENDED PLACEMENT ON THE PREMISES; POWER (STANDARD WALL JACK); & INTERNET AVAILABILITY
- FOR QUALIFYING LOCATIONS THE MACHINE(S) WILL BE PLACED FREE OF CHARGE—WITH NO LEASE OR OTHER PAYMENTS, NO INSTALLATION COSTS AND NO DELIVERY CHARGES



- ALL THERMAL PAPER (FOR PRINTING CARDS/PINS) AND PREPRINTED FREE SWEEPSTAKES ENTRY FORMS ARE ALSO PROVIDED AT NO CHARGE

**WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME & THE PREMISE OWNER?**

- Q** WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO MAKE NET/MONTH ON EACH MACHINE THAT I AM ABLE TO PLACE?
- A** WELL OVER \$200/MONTH IN RESIDUAL INCOME BASED ON OUR 'BETA TEST' PERFORMANCE SO FAR.
- Q** WHAT WILL THE STORE OWNER MAKE ON AN AVERAGE LOCATION?
- A** BASED UPON OUR 'BETA TEST', THE STORE OWNER WILL AVERAGE WELL OVER \$1K/MACHINE/MONTH.

**Q: HOW DO I LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS NEW PRODUCT/PROGRAM?**

**CALL US TODAY  
1-800-927-5050  
(8 am - 5 pm Eastern)**

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY...**



**APCCS  YES**

*If you are not using APCC Services as your dial around aggregator....it is*

**"TIME FOR CHANGE"**

- ★ APCC Services is the only aggregator in the industry that uses all the PSP processing fees to fund the costs associated with carrier complaints and payments
- ★ Those processing fees allowed APCC Services to fight for its customers, even at the nation's highest court, against the biggest IXCs—a fight that WE won!
- ★ APCC Services has filed over 30 DAC Complaints for our customers; Complaints that already have generated \$millions in additional DAC
- ★ APCC Services protects its customer claims in multiple carrier bankruptcies



The country will be electing for a *change* this month.

You can elect for a *change* today.....and earn all of the dial around compensation you are entitled to!



<http://www.apccsideas.com>

# Free is good

If you send in 5 boards for repair, you'll pay for 4 and get the 5th one **FREE\***.

Here's why you should do business with us:

- ➔ we'll beat anyone else's price
- ➔ we have a fast turnaround, guaranteed
- ➔ we are a factory trained authorized repair center
- ➔ we guarantee our work
- ➔ we work on Elcotel, Protel, and Ernest
- ➔ we've been in business for 18 years; and
- ➔ we've provided service to more than 2,000 PSPs.

We also carry a full line of payphones including inmate payphones.

COMMUNICATION  
CONNECTION

[www.payphone2000.com](http://www.payphone2000.com)

800.798.5616

\*you must mention this ad to qualify for the repair special



▲ CC-350

◀ CC-450

## PERSPECTIVES

ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APCC®

November 2008 — Volume 16 — Number 6



### contents

#### 10 Protel's Eleven

by Kevin Rogers and Victor Rollo

Test your knowledge by seeing if you can answer these questions about Protel payphones.

#### 18 Identity theft: It could happen to you

by Flori Meeks

Here are some steps you can take to protect yourself from identity theft.

#### 14 Covering all the bases

by Flori Meeks

Taking a fresh look at your route is always a good idea.

last word

#### 28 E-mail efficiency

by Flori Meeks

Here are some tips to be sure you're using your e-mail wisely.

DEPARTMENTS: • Editorial - 9 • Industry Briefs - 22 • Classifieds - 24 • Calendar - 27 • Advertiser Index - 27

Cover design by Ellen Custer,  
2d - A design collaborative

# Let Worldwide Telecommunications Inc. be your "Ticket to Better Service"

## WTI OSP

Team up your choice of our OSP products with one of our Long Distance packages and save, save, save!

Operator Service and Star Commissions up to 70%  
Star 88 and Star 11 collect call plans

Online Services and Reporting  
24 hours a day/7 days a week

Free Rate Files from The Rate Center with monthly updates

More than one choice of OSP carrier, don't be limited

Month to Month Contract

Flex ANI reports on OSP and Star products

[www.worldwideosp.com](http://www.worldwideosp.com)  
877-967-7746

## WTI Long Distance

If you are ready for a Long Distance carrier that provides you with the tools to better manage your business, you are ready for WTILD!

Online 1+ reports daily  
24/7 online account management

Flex ANI reports  
Directory Assistance Programs

8XX, 1010 or DID routing

Fraud protections limiting per minute and per day usage

International plans that have the best pricing in the industry

[www.wtild.com](http://www.wtild.com) 866-208-7283

1+ Rates From  
1.9¢ - Domestic  
2.9¢ - Mexico City  
1.9¢ - Canada  
800 Access  
\*Call for your rates today!

THE  
RATE  
CENTER

## Perfecting the RATE FILE!

Protel™ Elcotel™  
Intellical™ Ernest™

Rate Files for  
All Phone Types

**\$10**

100% Satisfaction Guarantee or Your Money Back  
Orders filled 24/7 • Major Credit Cards Accepted

[www.theratecenter.com](http://www.theratecenter.com) 800-460-2291

## CUSTOM TELEPHONE PRINTING



### Your Source For...

Uppers & Lower, Aluminum Signage, Vault Door Covers, Backer Cards, Handset Labels and so much More!!!

Call us for a FREE sample pack!  
Phone: 800-753-5300  
or 815-338-0000  
Fax: 800-933-5303  
or 815-338-0009

Visit our Website at: [www.customtel.com](http://www.customtel.com)  
Email us at: [sales@customtel.com](mailto:sales@customtel.com)

We have everything you need, except a better *swing*.

- operator services products – very aggressive payment plan
- directory assistance – lowest rates in the industry
- local advertising product – ask us about 1-877-LAWAWARD
- competitive 1+ rates
- unsurpassed technical and customer support – let us show you how to squeeze the maximum revenue out of your route
- if you need training, we offer the U.S. Payphone School

## US Interconnection Services Inc.

[www.usis-corp.net](http://www.usis-corp.net)  
[sales@usis-corp.com](mailto:sales@usis-corp.com)  
(866) 631-USIS (8747)

## Go into your new venture with an old friend.

TU LLC now offers Quadrum coinless/inmate payphones:

- highly durable
- volume control
- 3 levels of transmitter sidetone reduction
- armor dial keypad
- ringers are an option
- variety of handset cord lengths
- replacement parts available



"Serving the payphone industry since 1985"

For information and pricing call

• Randy Pakos/Pat Soltis • Cheryl Barker • Jerry Sherman  
800-735-6597 866-528-5352 877-528-5352



## T.R.I.A.D. – UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS

"The Industry's Complete Payphone Supplier"

- Complete Payphones • Repairs
- Parts • Refurbishing
- Enclosures/Pedestals • Technical Support
- Protel – Elcotel – Intellical – Quadrum
- Smart Boards – New & Refurbished
- Air Machines

For information and pricing call

• Randy Pakos/Pat Soltis • Cheryl Barker • Jerry Sherman  
800-735-6597 866-528-5352 877-528-5352

TU LLC "Serving the payphone industry since 1985" APCC MEMBER

- APCC represents PSPs at the FCC, at state PUCs and on Capitol Hill.
- APCC produces a bimonthly magazine that helps PSPs maximize the profitability of their businesses.
- APCC hosts the largest annual trade show that focuses on products and services for PSPs.
- APCC keeps its members up to date on crucial legal and regulatory issues, including several special "members only" portions of our Web site.
- APCC advises its members on required federal forms and deadlines.
- APCC educates consumers and policymakers about the importance of payphones.
- APCC members receive significant discounts to attend APCC trade shows.
- APCC has 900+ members. We'd love for you to join us.

*Join today.*

www.apcc.net

# PERSPECTIVES

ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

**PUBLISHER**  
Tracey Timpanaro

**DESIGN**  
Sharon Cordell,  
In Graphic Detail

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
Flori Meeks, Kevin Rogers,  
Victor Rollo

**APCC PRESIDENT**  
Willard R. Nichols

**APCC STAFF**  
Evelyn Bruggeman Daniel P. Collins  
Ruth Jaeger Maria Kerr  
Carol MacDougall Willard R. Nichols  
David Rossé Helly Shareefy  
Deborah Sterman Tracey Timpanaro

Staff e-mail example:  
hshareefy@apcc.net  
(except Timpanaro: tat66@apcc.net)

**APCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Chairman James Kelly III  
Michael Bright Don Goens  
Mason Harris Lin Harvey  
Janie Hughes Ray Kadingo  
Tom Keane Rick Lubbehusen  
Bill Manko Tammy Martin  
Ray Mastroianni Howard Meister  
George Niden John Nokleberg  
Dennis Novick Brian Oliver  
Gary Pace Bruce Renard  
Walter Rice Tom Rose  
Martin Segal Ralph Tipple  
Vincent Townsend

**APCC**  
625 Slaters Lane, Ste. 104  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 739-1322 • (703) 739-1324 (fax)  
apcc@apcc.net

*Perspectives* magazine  
625 Slaters Lane, Ste. 104  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(281) 646-0051 • (281) 578-8423 (fax)  
tat66@apcc.net

Display advertising  
Classified advertising  
Jannette Corcher  
(864) 278-3013  
jannettec@apcc.net

For subscriptions and address changes: [www.apcc.net](http://www.apcc.net)



Official magazine of the American  
Public Communications Council Inc.

## editorial



ing where they should, and in territories where they're not active, how about routing the call to your office? It's better than your customer dialing something and getting nothing.

Speaking of your customers, you also want to be sure you're charging them the correct rates, and you can't do that without current rate files. I might add that you could be undercharging without updated rate files; that should get your attention.

My final point on this subject is that computers aren't perfect; we all have the gremlins from time to time. One PSP said he has seen a situation where his rate files have just changed on their own.

Just one of many reasons why it's good to keep up with them.

Our second tale is brief but very telling. It starts with an OSP who was curious about how operator service rates affect payphone usage. The OSP looked at some customer data and confirmed his suspicions: extremely high rates affect usage in an extremely negative manner. Customer A has 1,200 phones and very high OSP rates. Over a three-month period, he earned \$1,500 in OSP revenue. Customer B has 300 phones, charges reasonable OSP rates, and earned \$2,000 over a three-month period. No further comment should be necessary.

And our last topic of the day concerns a success story I heard recently. One PSP had a bank of three phones, and the prepaid card use was very high on all three. He decided to offer 10 minutes to Mexico for \$1, but he went one better. He had one of his Spanish-speaking employees stand at the phones all day and explain the program to customers. The result? Each of those phones is doing 100 calls more a month now.

Just shows you that thinking out of the box definitely pays off.

So the bottom line for today is this: Small details can make a huge difference, especially given today's marketplace. Victor Rollo, a PSP in California, said it best: "Some people don't want to put the effort in because it's a declining business, but that's a mistake."

Amen to that,

*Tracey Timpanaro*

Tracey Timpanaro  
Publisher

## Scary bedtime stories

I have some interesting stories to share today.

For starters, I had a rather cantankerous PSP call me recently to tell me I am full of bull for recommending that you guys update your rate files. I'm going to go ahead and stand by my position. Here are a couple of reasons why.

- One PSP thought it was too much trouble to update his rate files, so he didn't — for three years! He ended up sending 5,000 local toll calls to his 1+ carrier that were included as part of his package from his local LEC. So he spent about \$450 that he didn't have to.
- Another PSP just didn't want to spend the money to buy them, but said, "I'll do my own rate files." He ended up with \$4,000 worth of calls to the Virgin Islands. (Rate files are complicated and laborious and best left to the experts.)

Stories like this drive me crazy. Updating rate files is so essential to running a quality payphone business, I have no idea how people miss that.

These days, every call from your phone is important, so you need to do whatever it takes to make sure the calls can go through (and, conversely, block the ones that shouldn't). People are particular — if your phone can't make a call, they will remember that and may not come back.

Here are some other interesting rate file facts. Did you know there were 30,000 changes in the Los Angeles area alone that affected rate files in 2006? And just think of all the new cell numbers that are being added each day. The Rate Center reports that there are hundreds of thousands of rate file changes every year. I would argue that each one of those is important.

I also want to specifically mention N11 calls. Since these are calls to social services agencies, the odds are pretty good that your customers would want to make these types of calls. You need to be sure they're work-

# Protel's Eleven

Test your skills — see if you can answer the most commonly asked questions about Protel payphones

*Editor's note:* Those of you with good memories will remember that we started a series of articles last November wherein we address common questions about a particular manufacturer's phones. We have covered Intellicall and Elcotel, and now it's Protel's turn.

Do you ever wonder what questions other payphone service providers (PSPs) are asking themselves when they're managing their routes? Well we do, so we decided to ask. For this article, we worked directly with Protel and also with Victor Rollo, a payphone provider who has been using Protel for 14 years. What follows are 11 questions that are commonly asked by Protel users.

**Q** I receive this error message: "The following files appear to be missing or corrupted."

**A** Verify the Config.Sys file for this statement: FILES = 100. If you change this number, the PC should be restarted to ensure that Windows sees the change.

**Q** My 7000 Series boards are not communicating. What should I do?

**A** The 7000 board should communicate at 1200 baud FSK (without the optional modem board installed). If this is not the case, verify these settings in ExpressNet:

1. Set the modem speed to 1200 or 300 baud — set at 1200.
2. 1200 Baud FSK (7000 Series only) — set this to On.
3. Phone speed should be set to 1200 in the Site Record.

**Q** What is "Error 12 Line 570 Opening Configuration File" when trying to run ExpressNet?

**A** This error indicates that the required SET XNET= statement (typically — SET XNET=C:\XNET\LOCAL) in the AUTOEXEC.BAT does not match the actual location of the XNET/LOCAL files or the files have been moved. This error may have occurred if you relocated XNET or the Local file after the initial installation of ExpressNet.

**Q** How do I restrict incoming calls?

- A**
1. From the ExpressNet Main Menu, select 1. Call Costing Records.
  2. Next, highlight the desired cost record and press Enter.
  3. Select 2. Edit Cost Bands.
  4. Using the page down key, go to band 88 for incoming calls.
  5. Set the Int time and Out time to 0 and 0 respectfully and press the F2 key to save your changes.
  6. Communicate with the payphone and test the functionality.

**Q** I keep getting Relay Jam (RJ) flags when I talk to my payphones.

**A** Check the function of the relay and verify coin recognition using these steps:

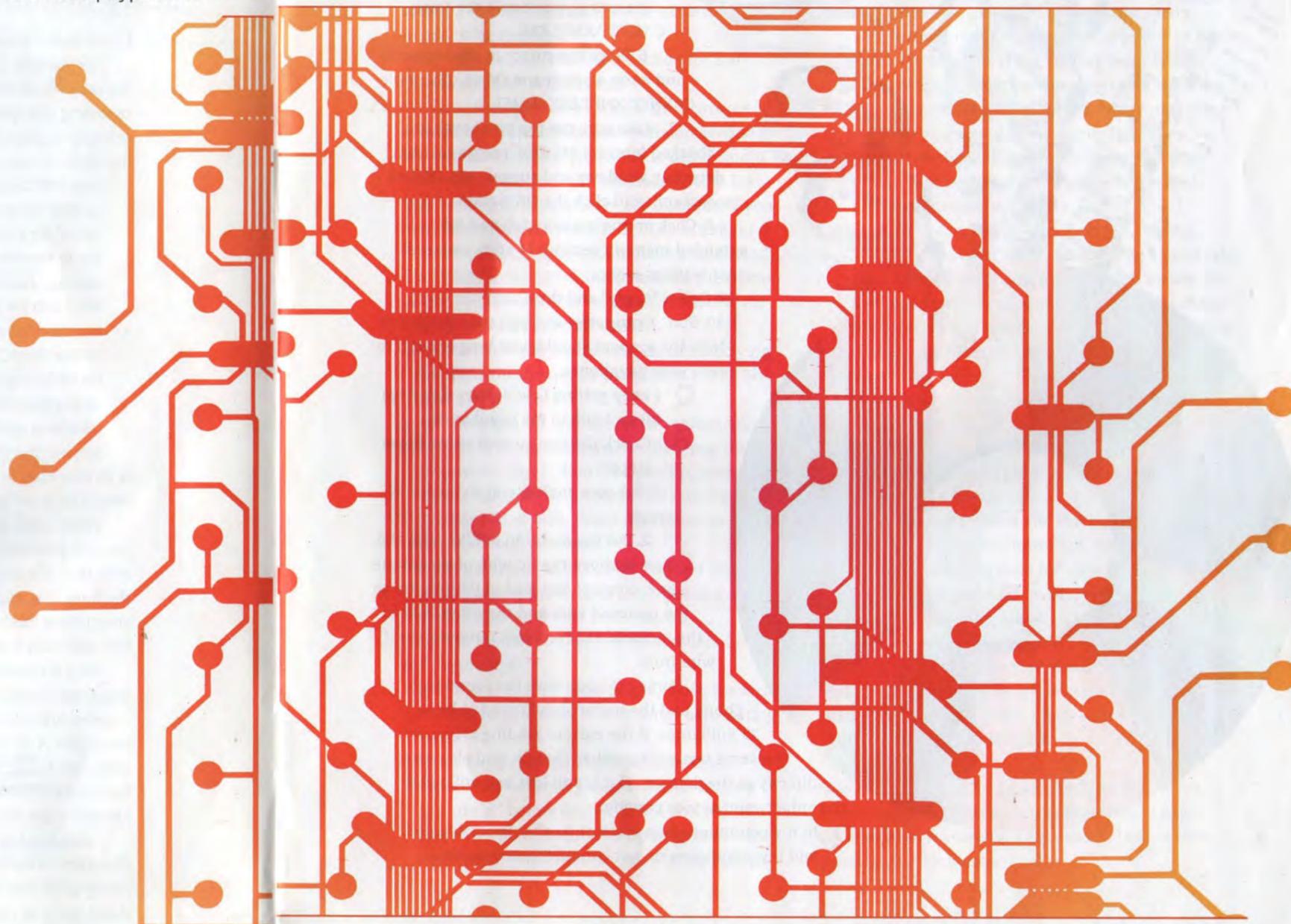
1. Enter the payphone's program mode (while on-hook, press and hold the Program button and come off-hook). Listen for a single beep in the handset and then release the button.
2. On the keypad, press 902. You will not hear any acknowledgment, but you can simply press a key on the keypad and hear a voice verification of the keys pressed (except the \* key, which we will discuss below).

3. Drop a coin in the coin chute and listen for a voice confirmation of the dropped coin's denomination in the handset.

4. Press \*1 and you will hear a voice prompt of Refunding, followed by the relay firing in the refund direction.

5. You should not hear any beeps, and the relay should only fire one time.

6. Drop another coin and press \*2. You will not hear a voice prompt, and the relay should fire in the collect direction. Again, you shouldn't hear any beeps, and the relay should fire only once. If you do hear beeps when firing the



relay, and/or the relay fires more than one time, you should either replace or repair the escrow relay, since the beeps tell us that the relay contacts are not functioning as required.

**Q** When polling, my modem count changes too fast and hangs up before reaching my payphone modem.

- A**
1. Exit ExpressNet.
  2. Find the shortcut you are using in Windows to enter ExpressNet.
  3. Right click on the icon.
  4. Go to Properties and click on the General tab.
  5. At the end of the CMD line entry, you should see this:  
C:\XNET\XNET.EXE
  6. Place the cursor at the very end and enter a space and /M:45. (Example: C:\XNET\XNET.EXE /M:45).
  7. Make sure the top two boxes are checked (prevent MS-DOS programs from detecting windows and suggest MS-DOS as necessary), and click the OK button.
  8. Click on the memory tab and set extended memory settings to auto. Leave all other settings alone.
  9. Select "Apply" and then "OK."
  10. Start ExpressNet and poll your payphone. Now the modem should wait long enough to reach your payphones.

**Q** I keep getting Low Battery (LB) flags when I talk to my payphones.

**A** Check the line current using these steps:

1. Set your multimeter to read milliamps.
2. Put the meter in SERIES with the line. Remove the tip wire of the phone line; connect one lead of your meter to the removed wire and the other lead to the terminal that you just removed the wire from.
3. Come off-hook with the Protel payphone and the meter should read at least 23 milliamps. If the current reading is low, try the same test with another chassis, and also try it directly at the demarc. If it is still low, you will need to contact your service provider.

**Q** In my communication errors, I receive "busy detected" and my payphones do not connect during polling.

**A** Poll the payphone again to see if the payphone just rings and rings without any answer. If so, then the first thing to do is check the payphone to see if there is dial tone at the payphone. If not, then check to see if there is dial tone at the demarcation point.

If there is no dial tone at the demarc, then you have a problem with the dial tone from the local exchange carrier (LEC). Call the LEC for repair, and once the LEC completes the repair, the phone should poll without any problem.

If there is dial tone at the demarc, then check your handset to see if it is still good. If the handset is good, then you probably have either a switch hook or a board issue that needs to be repaired.

**Q** In the Site Record, there is a section for the "download file." What is this?

**A** While in the Site Record, check the firmware version and current firmware version section to see what version the payphone is using, and if it is the latest version of firmware available for that board in the payphone. For example, if you are using firmware version DD7019-0023R for a Protel 7000 board, you should have a download file of DD703000.970 in the download file section of the Site Record. This would be the latest version of firmware for that version.

To install these downloads, do the following:

1. Highlight the download file section in the Site Record.
2. Hit the space bar and one of two things will happen. If available download files pop up, proceed to Step 3. If no files pop up, contact Protel's sales department for the latest available download files. These files must be loaded into the Protel software.
3. Select an available download file and hit enter.
4. Poll the payphone to load the latest firmware version into the Protel 7000 board.

**Q** I want to restrict certain phone numbers from my payphones.

- A**
1. Go to your costing records and chose the costing record you want to edit. Enter edit costing record.
  2. Choose edit restricted phone numbers.
  3. Enter the restricted phone number. Be sure you use a \* before each number entered. You can enter up to 50 different numbers in either a "10" or "7" digit number type. Using # for a

wild card in any of the "10" or "7" digit positions will enable more than 50 restricted numbers. Remember the # substitutes any number 1-9 for that wild card position.

**Q** Why do I have so many costing records for my payphone ANIs?

**A** Each CO (central office) has an associated costing record for that CO. Each CO consists of several prefixes that originate from that CO. To ensure that your payphones are dialing correctly and are charging the correct rates, you must have the proper costing record attached to the Site Record.

Incorrect costing records can lead to incorrect rates being charged to your customers, which could reduce your revenue in one of two ways. For starters, if the costing records are incorrect, you could be charging more than the local rate for a local call prefix. Many payphone customers are very savvy these days; they would clearly walk down the street to a payphone that is charging the correct rate. And they may not come back.

A second problem with incorrect costing records is that you might be charging a local rate for a zone or intraLATA prefix, which means the call may be costing you more than you're charging for it. This is for the PSPs who are using LECs that charge for each call vs. the all-inclusive dial tone plan.

With so many new area codes and prefixes coming into the North American Numbering Plan, it is essential to constantly keep these up-to-date. You can either purchase updated costing records/rate files or update them yourself; I would highly recommend the former. It's entirely too much information to keep up with, and it's mission critical for your business.

While these are basic questions, they are some of the most frequently asked and they address the most commonly used areas of Protel's software. Handling these matters consistently will help ensure that your payphones are operating properly and charging the correct rates, which of course helps maintain their profitability. ■

Kevin Rogers is in technical support with Protel Inc., and has 16 years of experience in the business. Victor Rollo of Rollo Communications is a Carlsbad, Calif.-based PSP with 14 years of experience in the industry.

by Flori Meeks

# Covering all the bases

Two industry veterans urge PSPs to take a fresh look at their locations

Most people who've been in business for a while understand that each potential customer is a unique individual. What appeals to one won't necessarily resonate with another.

In the payphone industry, the same concept applies to your locations. The brilliant idea that you successfully implement at your suburban convenience store locations simply may not see the same results at your urban gas station payphone across town.

But if you want your business to thrive, you need to give both locations — and all of your other ones — equal, ongoing attention. "Every single location is different," says Barry Selvidge, founder of Prime Point Media and executive director of the Georgia Public Communications Association (GPCA). "Each has its own unique attributes, and each one has to be managed as its own profit center."

Selvidge and fellow industry veteran Mark Shmikler shared ideas on maximizing location revenue at APCC 2008, which was held in late June at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Shmikler is president of Illinois Payphone Systems, U.S. Cash ATM's Inc. and ZBest Vending Inc.

Their presentation, "Central Time on Business Strategies: Leave No Rock Unturned," urged payphone service providers (PSPs) to take a fresh look at their locations and how they approach them. "It's a never-ending process, figuring out what will work and what won't at each location," Shmikler says.

Selvidge recommends a deliberate approach to location management. "If you apply the three Rs to your business, you can get where you want to be in getting the most revenue out of your location — real estate, relationships and resourcefulness."

## Real estate

Selvidge and Shmikler encouraged audience members to experiment with their locations so they can determine which services work best, and where. "You have locations that can be used in various ways," Selvidge says. "Your mentality should be, 'If it will pay me I'll try it,' as long as you don't have to put a lot of capital in."

It is obviously wise to be open to new ideas. As conventional revenue shrinks, non-conventional revenue sources can provide new opportunities. "You could look at ATMs, vending, air/vacs, amusement vending," Shmikler says. "Decide what you want to market and then figure out what works best."

"You do have to know what you're capable of providing," he continued. "Some people do merchant processing, but that hasn't worked for us. If you think you want to go into something, talk to all the suppliers who offer the product or service. That way you know you're getting the whole story."

When Shmikler considers programs for his payphones, he finds it useful to see how they've worked out for his competitors. "It helps me avoid costly mistakes," he says. "I get together with my competition to see what works and what doesn't. I also ask my customers — the location owners. I ask them what works."



## Keep it clean

Your services will go completely unnoticed, however, if you fail to offer customers clean, visible payphones and enclosures. "When you shop for a house you look at curb appeal," Selvidge says. "It's the same with payphones. If a customer is interested in using your phone, but it's dirty, he may go on by. You can't afford to lose a single customer today."

But appearance is only part of the equation, Shmikler says. A clean exterior goes hand in hand with a well-maintained unit. "No matter how clean it is, they can't make a call if it doesn't work," he says.

If you have had a malfunctioning phone on your route, it's up to you to convince customers to give it another chance when it's ready for use again. "I talked to one PSP who had a really good idea," Selvidge says. "He had a phone that was out of service, and when it was fixed he placed a bright orange sticker on the phone saying it was in service again to lure the customers back."



RYAN MCCORMAN

## Keep it simple

Drawing customers to phones is about more than providing the basics. A successful PSP is constantly working to convey the value of his services and prices to potential users. "You should practice the KISS method [Keep It Simple Stupid]," Selvidge says. "When you communicate about the rates your phone offers, it should be very easy for customers to figure out what they're paying for and what services they're getting."

"If they don't understand it, they're not going to use the payphone," he says. "When you have too

many stickers, it gets very complicated. If you keep it simple, you'll see more repeat customers; more people will use the phone."

## Relationships

Ultimately, every courtesy you show your customers strengthens your relationship with them. With that idea in mind, it pays to examine your payphones and services closely to make sure they're accommodating your customers' needs.

"I've seen phones in southern Illinois where the upper and lower housing cards had three point type on them," Shmikler says. "That's too small to read. You have to keep in mind that people don't read as much these days, and that they're used to graphics, so use those where you can."

Also, think about who your customers are, Selvidge said. He cited the example of Anheuser-Busch, an advertiser with Prime Point Media that goes to great lengths to reach specific customer bases. "They get to know areas so well that they even modify their ads to incorporate different dialects within a language," Selvidge says. "You should drill down to be sure you know well the areas where you have your phones."

Shmikler said that he knows a PSP who changed the language on his signage and the revenue went up significantly at that location.

You should also think about your operator service provider (OSP). "Do they have Spanish-speaking operators, and can they communicate effectively?" Selvidge asks. "You should make test calls and hear it for yourself, because this is the service your customers are getting. Knowing what your customers see and hear is really important."

## Finding opportunities

Fine-tuning your business can be a challenging task, but remember, you're not alone. Most PSPs form numerous business relationships in the course of their day to day work. Leverage them. In some cases, they can help you create the new revenue streams your business needs to stay strong.

"Maybe you can sell prepaid cards," Selvidge says. "Maybe you could offer business telephone service and be a reseller. The more hooks you have in your location, the tougher it is to get it away from you."

Basically, payphone providers have two categories of business opportunities to consider, Selvidge and Shmikler say. Options that require capital expenditures include air/vac/water machines, ATMs

and vending machines. But PSPs also can bring in additional revenue with less capital-intensive options, such as advertising, prepaid card sales or offering business telephone service.

Opportunity can also come in the form of new locations. Shmikler recommends a great tool for finding them. "We have found this phenomenal product called salesgenie.com. If it has a SIC code [Standard Industrial Classification], they have it. It's Internet-based, and there's a monthly fee. But you do need to learn how to use it to maximize its effectiveness for your business."

*(Editor's note: Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes are four digit numerical codes assigned by the U.S. government to business establishments to identify the primary business of the establishment. Definition courtesy of Illinois State University.)*

## Resourcefulness

Sometimes you can do all of the right things to no avail. But even a struggling location can be turned into a winner if you're willing to take bold steps to save it. In some cases, your best recourse is to approach your location owner about adjusting your commission rates.

"You may feel that you can't ask to alter the terms of your contract at a location, but that isn't true," Selvidge says. "You've been providing your customers good service for a lot of years, but you need to generate revenue. It's a difficult business. If you educate them, many times location owners are receptive to changing the terms of the contract."

Take a proactive approach to your contracts now, Selvidge says. If the need arises to make a change — or to leave a location altogether — you'll want a legal foundation in place to do it. "It is very important to have a clause in your contract saying that you can get out," he says. "Why risk it?"

"I also see contracts that aren't clear on what revenue sources the commission is paid on. This needs to be spelled out."

Speaking of spelling it out, Shmikler says sometimes certified letters are the best way to communicate with location owners. "One good idea is to send a certified letter notifying your location owner of a change in your commission rate. This puts the onus on them to respond, and if they're upset, you have the option of staying at the higher commission rate."

In terms of saving locations, line sharing is an option that should be considered as well. "We have done line sharing at some of our locations that are

close together," Shmikler says. "Once in a blue moon a person will try to use each phone at the same time, but in general it has worked out very well and has saved us money."

And of course, semi-public phones are another way to save money. "One-third of my route is semi-public phones, and it helps a lot," Shmikler says. "They are out there; you just have to find them. We have a full-time salesperson that works on this."

Pulling a phone should be a last resort, Selvidge says. "Keep in mind that things may evolve over time. We don't know what it is now, but in a year it may be clear that you can utilize your real estate in some other way."

## Breaking the rules

Sometimes, the best way to promote a healthy location is to break some rules or traditions, Shmikler says. In some cases, success is just a matter of changing your philosophy.

"For example, we have a contract with a gas station chain, and our mentality was that we had to have a phone at every one of their stations," he explains. "They have 70 locations, and we pulled 30 of the phones without notifying them at all. They never even called. We had thought they would have a cow."

"At a few of the locations, the store owner would ask why we were removing the phone, and we simply said, 'It's not making any money,' and that was fine. If they do end up making a stink, you can always put a phone back in."

Another idea along these lines is something Shmikler calls "coopetition" with competitors. "I have 150 phones in one of my competitor's areas, and he has 150 phones in one of mine. We did a trade — I service his phones, and he services mine. No money is exchanged, and it saves me \$30,000 a year. Be creative. We're not trying to kill each other any more. Cooperate."

Ultimately, Shmikler says, it's up to you to fight for your locations' success. "Get off your butts and do the work," he says. "Inertia is a powerful force. We want to stay where we are because it's comfortable. It's hard to get the ball rolling, especially when negative things are happening. Sometimes if you try an idea, and it doesn't work, you may come up with a variation on that idea that will work." ■

Flori Meeks is a freelance writer who is based in Houston. She has 20 years of writing and editing experience, and has been writing for *Perspectives* for nine years.

# Identity theft: It could happen to you

Unfortunately, no one is safe from this type of fraud. However, there are some steps you can take to protect yourself.

*Editor's note:* Occasionally, *Perspectives* covers topics that are not payphone-related but that we feel are important to our readership. Identity theft, which has been a hot topic in the news recently, is the type of problem where most people say, "Oh that will never happen to me." However, the reality is that it is occurring with increasing regularity, and the consequences can be quite devastating, so we thought it was worthy of coverage.

Deborah Hardy first learned she was a victim of identity theft in 2000. Today, she says, the situation has yet to be fully resolved. She doubts it ever will be. "People talk about when someone robs your house you feel violated; it's the same thing," the Mahopac, N.Y. resident says. "Not a day goes by when I don't think about it."

The U.S. Department of Justice defines identity theft as any type of crime in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in some way that involves fraud or deception. It is a crime that is on the rise worldwide and in the United States.

A National Crime Victimization Survey from 2005 shows that 1.6 million U.S. households experienced theft of existing accounts other than a credit card that year, and 1.1 million households discovered misuse of personal information.

"There are various types of identity theft," says attorney Mari Frank, author of "From Victim to Victor: A Step by Step Guide for Ending the Nightmare of Identity theft." "The financial one is the one people are thinking of most." Financial identity theft can involve the fraudulent use of your credit, your debit card, your bank account or other financial holdings.

With medical ID theft, the perpetrator would use your insurance information to cover their medical care, leaving their procedures and diagnoses on your record.

Cyber identity theft often is an attack on a person's reputation. The fraudster creates e-mail accounts or Web sites in their victims' names and uses them to slander them.

A fraudster armed with your Social Security number can work in your name, leaving you liable for income taxes. They also can commit crimes in your name. "Anything you can do with your social, your fraudster can do," Frank says. Not only can these crimes involve out of pocket expenses, they leave victims with the costs of trying to restore their reputations and correct false information.

So how can we protect ourselves, our employees and our clients? It's an involved process, Frank says. Her book devotes 232 pages to the subject. But the good news is there are steps we can take to minimize our chances of being victimized.

## A tough road

Frank is careful to warn clients and readers that they can lessen their chances of identity theft, but there is no magic bullet that will completely protect them. "So much of your information is out there, in databases, online." More than half of the identity theft cases in this country are caused by unscrupulous employees at banks, credit bureaus, the IRS and other organizations who take liberties with your personal information, she says.

Hardy can trace her experience with identity theft to that kind of scenario. An employee with her mortgage company at the time was selling clients' social security numbers. Hardy, who is a director of guidance for a school district, got her first sign of trouble when she received a call from a computer company questioning a purchase. Hardy, who hadn't bought a computer, wasn't too worried. There was a second

Deborah Hardy in her town, and Hardy figured the other woman with her name made the purchase.

But Hardy started receiving similar calls from other businesses. Then she learned a credit card was opened in her name at a linen store. Hardy began alerting credit reporting agencies, her bank and her credit card company and investigating her situation. "It was huge; it was a daunting experience," she says. "I never knew when the next charge would come up."

Hardy tracked down a Bronx address where items ordered in her name were being delivered, but she learned later that the address was for an alley. Police officials told her they wouldn't be able to make an arrest in her case unless they caught someone in the act of using her identity fraudulently. At one point, a youth officer she knew in Tarrytown offered to help her, but after the attacks of Sept. 11, Hardy's case had to go on the back burner.



Hardy has not seen any signs of the fraudulent use of her identity in years, but she still doesn't know who victimized her or if that person will strike again. She has her credit report permanently flagged. Any time anyone attempts to establish a credit card account or make a purchase in her name, they must answer sev-

eral specific questions. Meanwhile, Hardy closely monitors her financial accounts, medical records and credit card statements. "You still don't know if someone will call you and say, 'By the way...'" she says.

### For the individual

Frank urges individuals to identify their risky behaviors and stop them. She tells people to ditch their bank debit cards, for instance, and replace them with ATM cards. "With a debit card, you are not protected by federal law at all if it's (fraudulently) used without a PIN. That's the most dangerous thing in your wallet."

Checks are dangerous, too, she says, because they give potential fraudsters access to your bank account and routing numbers.

Avoid providing personal information by e-mail, unless you're sending an encrypted message to someone you trust.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) offers additional tips:

- Shred financial documents and paperwork with personal information before you discard them.
- Protect your Social Security number. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet or write your number on a check. Give it out only if absolutely necessary or ask to use another identifier.
- Don't give out personal information on the phone or through the mail unless you know who you are dealing with.
- Never click on links sent in unsolicited emails. Instead, type in a Web address you know. Use firewalls, anti-spyware and anti-virus software to protect your computer, and keep them up-to-date. (See OnGuardOnline.gov).

- Don't use an obvious password like your birth date or the last four digits of your Social Security number.
- Keep your personal information in a secure place at home.

The FTC urges individuals to keep an eye out for potential red flags, such as bills that do not arrive as expected, unexpected credit card or account statements, credit denials for no apparent reason or calls or letters about purchases you did not make.

### Your response

If you do suspect identity theft, act immediately, Frank says. "You must put everything in writing," she says. "Remember, you're considered guilty until proven innocent. And you must notify everyone: credit grantors, credit bureaus, banks."

Three nationwide consumer reporting bureaus have a toll-free number for placing an initial 90-day fraud alert. Calling one company is sufficient, the FTC says.

The numbers are:

Equifax: (800) 525-6285

Experian: (888) 397-3742

TransUnion: (800) 680-7289

Placing a fraud alert will entitle you to free copies of your credit report. Look for inquires from companies you haven't contacted, accounts you didn't open, and debts on your accounts that you can't explain. Your credit report won't reveal all types of ID theft, but it's a start.

The FTC also encourages victims to close all accounts that have been tampered with or created fraudulently, file a police report and report the crime to the FTC, (877)-ID-THEFT (438-4338).

### For businesses

If individuals face a daunting to do list when it comes to preventing identity theft, businesses face an even higher standard. Their actions have the potential to affect countless customers and employees.

Frank offered some general guidelines for all businesses to consider, whether they are a sole proprietorship, a partnership or a corporation.

"No. 1, only collect what you need," Frank says. "If you don't need a Social Security number, don't ask for it."

Next, Frank says, maintain an "audit trail."

"Know who accesses your important information, and conduct regular audits," she says. "You have to treat sensitive information like your biggest company secrets."

And store the sensitive data you have properly, Frank adds. Keep paper records in a locked file, and encrypt the electronic data on your computer and your backup tapes. It's also wise to lock up CDs, floppy disks and zip drives, and limit access to employees with a legitimate business need.

If you discard information, take the time to shred it. "You need to have a privacy consciousness," Frank says. "Think, what am I doing to protect my employees' and customers' information."

### Shared responsibility

The FTC urges businesses to hire and educate employees carefully. Check references and do background checks before hiring employees who will have access to sensitive data.

You can ask every new employee to sign an agreement to follow your company's confidentiality and security standards for handling sensitive data. Make sure they understand that abiding by your security plan is a priority. From there, train employees regularly to recognize security threats.

When it's time for an employee to leave your company, it's up to you to prevent them from maintaining their access to sensitive information. Terminate their passwords and collect keys and identification cards.

### Stay diligent

Whether you're working to protect yourself, your family or your staff, preventing identity theft must be a meticulous, ongoing process. The process begins with your attitude. "I'm a trusting person, but I ask more questions now," Hardy says. "I should have asked that mortgage company how it processed its information, where the information was going, who gets it and how it's protected."

There are plenty of sources to turn to for more information. Frank recommends [www.privacy.ca.gov](http://www.privacy.ca.gov), which features an in-depth section for businesses she helped create.

Businesses and individuals also can find advice at [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft).

Frank's site, which includes information about her book, is [www.identitytheft.org](http://www.identitytheft.org).

"Preventing (identity theft) is hard, but understanding it does happen is important," Hardy says. "No one is immune to this." ■

Flori Meeks is a freelance writer who is based in Houston. She has 20 years of writing and editing experience, and has been writing for *Perspectives* for nine years.

# industry briefs

## product news

### FPTA Technologies

FPTA Technologies and Lucky Dawg Promotions LLC are joining forces to provide payphone service providers (PSPs) a new revenue opportunity: prepaid phone card machines with promotional sweepstakes.

The machines vend \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20 phone cards via a touch screen kiosk. In addition, users who buy \$1 cards will receive an automatic sweepstakes entry. The machines feature a real-time visual display that shows users whether their entry is a winner.

FPTA Technologies and Lucky Dawg Promotions are paying payphone providers to install the machines at qualifying locations. Prospective PSPs must be able to prove the sites they're proposing have a standard wall jack for power and Internet availability.

Once the location has been approved, the machines will be placed at no cost, with no lease or other payments, and no installation or delivery charges. Clients also receive free paper for printing the phone cards, along with free sweepstakes entry forms.

These prepaid card machines are intended to offer payphone providers and location owners steady monthly income.

For more information about this program, call (800) 927-5050.

### America's Business Software

America's Business Software has introduced a new version of its route management program: MIST 11.0.

The MIST software, a single-entry accounting system, was developed for the payphone industry in 1988. The newest version, MIST 11.0, can be used to manage ATMs and air/water/vac machines in addition to payphones.

The new system is designed to reduce the time clients spend processing data, to provide more accurate and manageable route data and to show users the true profitability of each piece of equipment, said America's Business Software President John Vranich. "People may know their entire route is making money, but they may not know which locations are winners," he said.

The MIST 11.0 notifies users when equipment needs collection or a work order, and it creates an expense report when a piece is serviced.

The software also calculates commissions and prints out signed commission checks. It can store digital photos with site records, and it can import Excel and ASCII files.

Clients with ATM machines can use the software to obtain machine balances. The software also can estimate how much cash users will need to stock their machines for a cer-

tain number of days, based on the machine's transaction history.

"MIST takes all of the data and processes it into a single report," Vranich says. "You don't have to go to five different spreadsheets."

America's Business Software remains on call after clients purchase the software, and company representatives are available to answer users' questions, Vranich added.

For more information, call (916) 483-7266, e-mail sales@abs-mist.com or visit [www.abs-mist.com](http://www.abs-mist.com).

### ATM Express

ATM Express has introduced credit card processing, a new revenue opportunity for PSPs who operate ATMs.

Company representatives have developed a detailed, user-friendly educational program for newcomers to the credit card industry.

"This can be very intimidating if you don't know what you're doing," said Vice President of Sales Dave Mukherjee. "We're breaking it into easy-to-understand sound bytes."

After the training process, ATM Express remains on call to provide guidance, service and support. "We're going to keep coming back and asking how we can help you," Mukherjee said.

This new program is an especially good fit for PSPs, Mukherjee said. "They already have the merchant relationships. Why not leverage them on the ATM side and the credit card processing side?"

"Payphone service providers may think they don't know anything about credit card processing. That's OK. We can work with that."

ATM Express is based in Billings, Mont. For more information, call (817) 253-5240, or e-mail [davem@paymentallianceintl.com](mailto:davem@paymentallianceintl.com).

### Salesgenie.com

Salesgenie.com offers a new source of leads for PSPs looking for locations.

The company offers clients access to a wide range of databases, including new business listings. Clients can search these databases by a wide range of parameters: location, size, sales volume or Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), the United States government system for classifying industries using a four-digit coding system.

Payphone providers that access these databases will know when prospective locations open, and therefore will have an opportunity to be one of the first to approach the location about payphones,

ATMs, air/vacs, or other services.

Customers can use Salesgenie.com to conduct national searches or to zero in on specific neighborhoods.

"We find that more and more businesses are identifying new ways to use our product to find new opportunities," said Rod Butters, vice president of marketing. "We're excited to have payphone providers leverage this service to find new opportunities in their areas."

In addition to its headquarters in San Carlos, Calif., Salesgenie.com maintains a dozen regional offices around the country.

The company updates its business databases monthly and manages them in-house. Company representatives collect data from multiple sources and verify the information by phone. These listings include established businesses and new operations.

Its online technology includes a contact manager, business credit reports and mapping.

The company offers consumer databases, too.

For more information, call (866) 327-6391, or visit [www.salesgenie.com](http://www.salesgenie.com).

## people & places

### BT

BT Payphone is giving communities throughout Great Britain the option of "adopting" phone booths and payphones that have been slated for removal.

BT has offered to maintain the phone booths for a monthly fee. Communities can pay an additional amount to maintain phone service.

BT has been pulling payphones for several years now in response to declining payphone usage and diminished profits. But a number of communities have asked the telecommunications company to reconsider. Community spokesmen say they consider their red phone booths part of their cultural legacy. Others say they still depend on the communications services payphones provide. ■



FOR SALE

# AMERICAN PRODUCTS

Manufacturer of AIRKING Air and Vacuum Machines

Looking for an EASY way to earn more income?



Powder Coated Air  
K14-750



Economy Stainless Steel  
Vac K52

Mention this ad and receive a FREE air or vacuum hose when ordering a machine!!  
Call us TODAY at 1-800-542-3336

**FOR SALE**

Protel 7000 payphones and equipment. Approximately 40 complete phones plus misc. equipment: Protel 7000 boards, ESC's, relays, keypads, handsets, etc. Most phones were installed inside - some equipment new. Everything sold as is. Asking \$4000 for everything! Call 814-941-8600.

**FOR SALE**

Protel boards for sale. Five 7000 boards at \$130 each and eleven 2000 boards at \$85 each. Other misc. parts also available. Contact Gemini Companies at 218-864-3002 or geminico@prtcl.com.

**FOR SALE**

Protel payphone route. 70 payphones on location around the Cleveland, Ohio area. Also included: extra parts, boards, housings and booths. Reply to P.O. Box 361118, Cleveland, Ohio 44136.

**FOR SALE**

300 plus Elcotel Series 5 phones in approximately 216 locations, primarily in Kentucky, a flat rate state. Many spare phones and parts. All long term contacts and long term relationships. Most are lucrative hospital and chain accounts. One of the oldest, best established PSP in USA. Owners retiring. Call 859-727-6633 or email Kcopp@fuse.net.

**FOR SALE**

Thirty-four Ernest D-3 payphones - enclosures - pedestals - 17 spare D-3 boards - handsets, relays, coin-co's, keypads etc. Equipment in storage near Morgantown, WV 26508. All offers considered. Call Rick Thomason at 304-379-3719 or e-mail rftomason@earthlink.net.



**STOP PAYING!**  
FOR TELEPHONE LINES

TC 4000P  
Priority Port snatches away line from other devices for ATM

TC 4000  
4 devices hunt 1 line

TC 2004  
4 devices hunt 2 lines

TC 2008  
8 devices hunt 2 lines

TC 5000  
8 devices hunt 4 lines

www.lineshare.com  
rjorge@lineshare.com  
Call Ricardo: 1-800-387-8064

FOR SALE

**TeleCom Printing Solutions, Inc.**  
**877-855-8557**  
Fax: 888-491-8400

**Payphone Signage Aluminum labels**

Labels include: "No coin needed for Charge and SOS Calls", "LOCAL CALLS Deposit 50¢ for first 15 minutes", "Llame a México! 3 Minutos Por \$1.00 A Todo Mexico!", "Directo Con Monedas", "VOLUME PRESS # KEY", "Use Your Credit Card or Call Collect", "Dial 0 + Area Code + Number".

**TPA TELECOM PRODUCTS Inc.**  
MANUFACTURER OF COIN OPERATED AIR & WATER MACHINES

- Air/Water Machines
- Air Vacs
- Security Vaults
- Payphone Enclosures
- Pedestals
- Inmate Products

CALL TODAY FOR MORE DETAILS  
1-866-874-8210  
WWW.TPITEXAS.COM

**N FORM PRODUCTS**

**1-800-677-6750**

**25¢ LOCAL CALLS**

**Local Calls 25¢**

Aluminum Signs • Plastic Signs  
Decals for Handsets & Face Plates  
Security Screw Drivers  
Band Clamps • Directory Binders  
Custom Signs

**Buy. Sell.**  
We've got you covered either way.  
Call Jannette at 864.278.3013

PAYPHONE SERVICE & REPAIR

**OUR REPAIR PRICES ARE IN RECESSION**

Protel, Elcotel, Ernest & Intellicall  
Circuit Board Repairs **\$25**

Coin Relays  
Keypads **\$8**  
CoinCo Coin Mechs

Protel & MARS Scanners **\$15**

6 MONTH WARRANTY / 3-5 DAY TURNAROUND  
VISA, MasterCard, Discover accepted  
**888-926-8057**  
PT Solutions  
ELECTRONICS REPAIR  
Quality Service Since 1997  
59 Lauderdale Ln  
Crawfordville, FL 32327  
www.electronrepair.com

**TeleSource**

**BELLCORE QUALITY REPAIR**

- Handsets
- Relays
- Hoppers
- Dials
- Coin Tracks

The Largest Coin Inventory in the U.S. Since 1984  
**Ric @ 800/544-0059**

FOR SALE

**Care about high quality, time proven equipment, delivered when promised?**

*So do we!*



8670-2WBTA

For over 35 years, we have been perfecting the process of getting high quality vacuums, air machines, and car wash products efficiently from our factory to your customers on time with our extensive, dependable, nation-wide distributor network! Our streamlined processes and superior customer service will blow you away! When we say your product will be ready, we mean it, and we deliver on time!



8670-2WTA

*Servicing the carwash, high pressure washer, convenience store, and misting industries for over 35 years! Built with pride in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.*

1025 63RD AVENUE S.W. • CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52404

www.jeadams.com

TOLL-FREE 800-553-8861

TOLL-FREE FAX 866-252-6694

PH 319-363-0237 • FX 319-363-3867



**payphone.com**  
Quality. Selection. Value.

Global Supplier of Public Telecommunications Equipment



Provider of coinless / inmate phones and all types of payphone boards, parts, and accessories including Protel & Elcotel



**We BUY - SELL - TRADE**

Visit us at

**WWW.PAYPHONE.COM 1-800-884-4835**



WANTED

**PAYPHONE ROUTES WANTED NATIONWIDE**

25 PHONE MINIMUM  
PLEASE E-MAIL CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRIES TO:  
TROSE@CPMC.BIZ

**ATTENTION DISTRIBUTORS WANTED**

I.D. TEL the leader in the telecommunication industry is looking for distributors to service their ever expanding customers in target markets throughout the United States.

This is an opportunity to incorporate and/or expand your existing business with a lucrative distributorship.

We are looking for companies or individuals with market expertise, financial strength and a track record of seizing profitable situations ... and making the most of them. In return, we offer a complete line of quality products, an outstanding brand image, and comprehensive business support.

**Call I.D. TEL Corp. 718.876.6000 ask for Tony or Barbara**

PAYPHONE SERVICE & REPAIR

**SERVICE**

Improve your cashflow - guaranteed. Declining revenue? Tough economy? Tough routes? Let the cashflow pros fix your business. Our service analyzes your complete business - this is not a payphone specific program. Guaranteed to save you at least \$500 or our service is free! Call today 1-888-427-4621.

**Are you managing payphones, ATMs, air or water machines?**

**M.I.S.T. is your solution**

(Management Information System for Pay Telephones)

- commission checks
- invoicing
- profit reports
- trouble tickets
- collection schedules
- and more

*The company with the unlimited support plans*

**America's Business Software**  
(916) 483-7266  
john@abs-mist.com

**state payphone association meetings calendar**

Central Atlantic Payphone Association  
(717) 697-5948  
Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey  
November 5

Illinois Public Telecommunications Association  
(224) 764-3131  
6 p.m.  
IPTA office  
3701 Algonquin, Ste. 450  
Rolling Meadows, Ill.  
November 11

Independent Payphone Association of New York  
(718) 776-8179  
6-8 p.m.  
Crowne Plaza LaGuardia  
November 12

Midwest Independent Coin Payphone Association  
(636) 922-5213  
Holiday Inn - Oakland Park (airport)  
December 10

Payphone Association of Ohio  
(440) 951-0604  
Conference call meetings:  
November 20  
December 18

San Diego Payphone Owners Association  
(888) 289-0011  
9:30 a.m.  
Cocos Restaurant  
La Jolla  
November 20

*All dates are subject to change; please verify with state associations prior to making travel arrangements.*

ADVERTISER INDEX

APCC ..... 8  
APCC Services ..... 3  
Communication Connection ..... 4  
CTI Operator Services ..... IBC  
Custom Telephone Printing ..... 6  
FPTA Technologies ..... 2  
NCIC ..... 1  
Payphone 211 ..... IFC  
The Rate Center ..... 7  
Talk Too Me ..... BC  
TU LLC ..... 6  
US Interconnection Service ..... 6  
Worldwide Telecommunications ... 7

Classified ads are accepted on a pre-paid basis only. Classified ad rates are \$1 per word with a 40-word minimum, or \$50 per column inch for display ads. Classified ads are accepted in written form only. To place an ad, please call Jannette Corcher at (864) 278-3013, or send your ad to:

Perspectives magazine  
625 Slaters Lane, Ste. 104  
Alexandria, VA 22314

©2008 by the American Public Communications Council Inc. This publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written permission of the American Public Communications Council Inc. Perspectives is published six times per year by the American Public Communications Council Inc.

Perspectives is offered for information purposes only. Statements of fact or opinion by authors or advertisers are believed to be true, but should not be considered as legal advice. If legal advice is required, contact your attorney.

Perspectives reserves the right to reject any advertisement submitted for publication.

## last word

by Flori Meeks

### E-mail efficiency

E-mail is a great tool, but it can zap your productivity if you're not careful

How often do you check your e-mail? Be honest. If it's more than every 30 minutes, the odds are you're not working as effectively as you could. How productive can you be if you're stopping every 15 minutes to check e-mail?

E-mail can be a valuable communications tool, but it can also create confusion and ill will. It can free up valuable time during your work day or lull you into wasting it. There's no avoiding e-mail in today's business era, but it's up to you to use it wisely.

#### Manage it wisely

Like other businesses, PSPs could benefit from an e-mail protocol, says Julie Miller, founder of the Washington state-based consulting firm, Business Writing That Counts. "This is really developing a way of doing business with your customers," Miller says.

The protocol should include a strategy for e-mail management. Miller recommends a "3D" approach to each new message: delegate it, delete it or do it. If an e-mail falls into the third category, if it requires you to take some kind of action, ask yourself how long it will take you to respond.

"If you can respond to an e-mail in two minutes or less, go ahead," Miller said. If not, write the sender, acknowledge the e-mail and reassure him that you will respond within a certain time frame.

### Additionally, you should make an honest assessment about how much time you spend on personal e-mail during your work day.

You also should put some thought into how often you check your e-mails. Obviously, if you devote too much time to e-mail, it hampers your productivity in other areas. In fact, sometimes it's wise to avoid your inbox while you tackle a demanding project.

And be certain you have a system for sorting and storing your messages. Leaving them all in your inbox

is too chaotic and creates too much stress for both your eye and mind. Miller recommends a system of e-mail folders, especially for messages pertaining to active projects.

#### E-mail etiquette

Your e-mail protocol is about more than efficiency, though. For example, if you're mad, wait until you cool off before you respond. Also, don't assume all e-mails go through. Follow up or ask for verification for important e-mails you send.

Also, know when to pick up the phone. "If by three e-mails it starts getting crazy, and it would take two minutes to resolve the issue with a phone call, pick up the phone," Miller says.

Something else to consider is your e-mail address. Miller recommends separate addressees for personal and business e-mail. Additionally, you should make an honest assessment about how much time you spend on personal e-mail during your work day. Sure, it takes just three minutes to write a friend back, but over the day, those minutes add up.

Finally, pay attention to what you're writing. Your message should be to the point, easy to understand and professional. "If the reader cannot figure out your letter in 10 seconds or less, they're not going to continue to read it," she says.

And for goodness' sakes, run a "spell check" on your messages before they go out. Misspellings and grammatical errors do not make a favorable impression.

"E-mail presents an image of your business. Every bit of it, from the greeting to the signage line, is

an extension of your brand. There should be no cute sayings, no phrases, no blinking cartoons. We're doing business here, and it should be treated as such." ■

Flori Meeks is a freelance writer who is based in Houston. She has 20 years of writing and editing experience, and has been writing for *Perspectives* for nine years.



## Wake up in the morning with extra revenue

When you use CTI's **Collect Calls Dial \*11®** program, that's exactly what you'll get — extra revenue. And what's so great about this program is that you can try it even if CTI isn't your OSP. We'll send you the stickers at no cost, and you can try it on just a small batch of your phones. If you're not satisfied within the first 90 days, you just cancel, no questions asked.

Now, if you'd like to consider CTI as your OSP (and we think you should), here is a list of the services we offer:

- ▶ operator services
- ▶ collect calls dial \*11®
- ▶ inmate services  
(Correctional Control Network)
- ▶ pre call advertising
- ▶ FLEX ANI identifier
- ▶ directory assistance
- ▶ 1+ long distance
- ▶ on time commissions
- ▶ online reporting



800.672.9080  
www.customteleconnect.com



**“Some PSPs have increased their revenue by up to 60%! . . .  
Now it’s your turn to unlock the cash  
hidden in your payphone business.”**

**You really can increase your revenue  
by 30%, 40%, even 60%!**

Talk Too Me’s exclusive “High-5” enhancements now ensures a 30%+ increase in your coin, dial around compensation and OSP commission checks.

Seeing is believing! Even if you never add another payphone to your business you can generate more cash from it, immediately. Yes, immediately! How? It starts by taking a peek into the future with us. We know that when we show you your future you will be much more eager to take control of it. Immediately!

After 22 years, we have done everything necessary to make this a reality for you. Now, it’s up to you. A simple 10 minute call will prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that this potential is immediately available to you. Call us today at 1.866.900.8255 or email us at [success@talktoome.com](mailto:success@talktoome.com) to schedule your 10 minute “proof positive” demonstration.



Powered By

**TALK TOO ME**.com  
**COIN-LESS SERVICES**  
866.900.TALK

Call Talk Too Me toll-free at  
**1.866.900.8255**

© Copyright 2008 Talk Too Me, LLC All Rights Reserved.