Definity-G(x) Demystified:
By Walt Medak

Q: We are moving our system to our new corporate offices, and are changing our trunking in the process. Currently we just have Central Office analog trunks and a T-1 from our Long Distance provider. We have been proposed DID (Direct-Inward-Dial) trunks over a 2-way T-1 by our network provider, and though we think we would like DID, are unsure of what the heck it is we are being proposed. Will a 2-way DID trunk group work on a Definity, and what do we need to do to administer it?

A: DID is a protocol that most network providers and PBX manufacturers have agreed upon and conform to for delivering calls directly to an extension without intervention from an Operator or Attendant. It works very well on the Definity, and even the System75. It's a protocol dating back as far as processor driven telephone systems. Essentially, the call is proceeded with the last 3 or 4 digits of the telephone number from the network provider to the Definity, which then identifies them and routes them to the extension, hunt-group, etc. that has those matching digits at it's number. That's one of the nice things about the design of the Definity; it uses extension numbers as its means of addressing. You have nothing to administer once the trunk group has been assigned, as it's seamless in the Definity. The 2-way part is a function of the T-1 and the network provider's switch allowing both incoming and outgoing calls to utilize any trunk for either. It is a very good service that usually has a substantial cost savings associated with it, and I would highly recommend it. This is a very brief description of the protocol, and if you are still confused, give me a call so I can better explain it in detail.

Q: What is the function key setup for administering a Definity remotely with a PC?

A: The easiest method is to answer "4410" at the "terminal type" line where it shows a default of "513". This is where you login to the system and it asks you for the terminal type. This method will assign your function keys for you upon each command. If you want to use the "513' terminal type, the function setup is as follows: (I forget some, but the essential ones are these, all case sensitive) F-1 = escape+Ow for "Cancel", F-3 = escape+SB for "Enter", F-5 = escape+Om for "Help", F-7 = escape+[U for "Next Page" and F-8 = escape+[V for "Previous Page" (the O's are capital o's, not zero, and the [is the left bracket). The "escape" is different for different programs, but many, such as Procomm Plus, use ^[(upper-case 6 and a left-bracket) for the escape sequence. For example, this would make "Next Page" program as ^[[U. This, too, can be confusing, so a call to us might help clear any cobwebs I may have spun. The very best program we have found for administering either a Definity or an Audix system is the Lucent/Avaya program called "Definity Site Administration" available from Lucent/Avaya. DSA, as it is known, has the function keys assigned for you, whether you use "4410" or "513" emulation. Until this program came out, we advised against using anything but Crosstalk Mark-IV(out of production) or Procomm Plus. Terranova was a confusing mess, though I understand recent versions of it work OK.

Q: Our AUDIX Small 8.2 is serving us well, but we have been told by Lucent/Avaya that we will not be supported any longer. What is the secondary market doing for its support, if anything?

A: Happily, upon the notification you mention, the secondary market is awash with hardware and knowledge to support the AUDIX Small (or Large, for that matter) in any software release for years to come. I say "happily", for the hundreds of secondary market Distributors and Dealers are delighted it is being abandoned by Lucent/Avaya. That system is, as it has for years, functioning quite well, and serving the needs of the end users needing only voice-mail and/or automated attendant. From here on out, the upgrading to more storage and ports will only get more economical, as many who were scared into upgrading to Intuity Audix have traded-in their old systems, and Lucent/Avaya has auctioned them to the secondary market distributors, and this has caused the pricing to drop significantly. It's a great place to stay for quite awhile if you don't need any other options than voice-mail or auto-attendant, or need to be on the "bleeding edge". All that is necessary is to scan the advertisements in Telecom Reseller to find a secondary market dealer who will, if not themselves, refer you to a dealer who can support you as well, if not better, than you currently enjoy (enjoy?……… whatever!).

Q: We have been proposed an upgrade that will enable us to use TCP/IP functionality with our Definity. This has been defined to us as the best option for distribution for our PBX, and touted as a necessity. What exactly is the advantage for us?

A: It's hard to define, not knowing your size and condition of flux. If you are a large (several hundred or a few thousand port system that is installing in a location where new wiring is necessary, there may be an advantage to it. If you are located where you have all the wiring in place for your system, it doesn't make much sense to me to upgrade just to have TCP/IP. My understanding is that you can use the TCP/IP functionality to send your voice communications over your data wiring in prioritized packets eliminating the need for double wiring, i.e., a run for voice and a run for data to each workstation. If my information is correct , TCP/IP only works well on a LAN. Assuming it will work well *some day* over a WAN, then there may be good reason *then* to upgrade to it to reduce the cost of networking both voice and data systems separately, assuming the prioritized packets don't slow your data network to unusable functionality. Based on the information above, my recommendation would be to wait for functionality over a WAN before considering it necessary, unless it will save cost-justifiable dollars in additional wiring to the LAN. If any of our readers can add information supporting or contrary to the above, I invite them to contact me, and I will run the information in the next issue.