Q. I received the following from Margo Kanthak :

In regards to your comments regarding frequent ARS programming in your Oct. 2001 article in Telecom Resellers:

While it's so true that most of the 75s were set up to route calls to DID, WATS, etc. for least cost routing that is no longer needed, ARS is still a necessary programming feature in most cases. Many of my clients do indeed want to restrict long distance on selected phones, and I accomplish this with ARS Analysis and the FRL settings on route patterns. But, ARS programming can easily be set up to eliminate constant maintenance. Just thought I'd pass on a "universal" ARS plan we've been implementing over the last number of years to pre- accommodate all the frequent additions of NPAs and also local 10- and 7-digit dialing. (We both know the ILECs never advise you of new local prefixes <grin>.) I have implemented this on all of the Definitys I've programmed via ARS Analysis with client-happy results.

Two brief sets of digits entered in the ARS Analysis tables differentiate long distance from local 7- or 10-digit dialing:

Long Distance: In the dialed digits column, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 are all set to 11 digits and sent to the long distance route pattern (with accompanying FRLs on the route). Exceptions, such as 1800/1888/1877 etc. are entered separately to differentiate them from the "18" general setting and route to local patterns. And of course, 1900 is set to deny. Sometimes, a business may want to allow any phone on the system to call other branches that are long distance, so those specific numbers are set as exceptions, too, sent to a route allowing a lower FRL.

Local : 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 are all set to minimum 7 and maximum 10 digits and sent to the local route.

*Margo A. Kanthak*

A. Thank you for your well thought-out and detailed reply, Margo, and even more for reading my column.

What you have described is precisely what I meant by "At the very least, send everything to the public switched network.....", and a method that works very well for upwards of 80% to 90% of systems incorporating ARS. I would still debate the need for it as a tool for restricting toll and other types of calls for prescribed "restricted" stations. Restrictions may be very effectively done within the COR utilizing some of the other options and the proper implementation of the "Calling Permission" page. For any but the most basic system restriction schemes, this may not be as good a solution you provided, but I would venture a guess that it would serve the greater number of systems we support. However, after saying that, have we abandoned your method of ARS implementation? NO. We use it all the time because it's the method most of our clients are familiar with, and therefore have a comfort for. One thing we do that's different from yours is we don't bother with the 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 or 19 for long-distance…… we simply

use a one line entry with “1” as the dialed string with 11 digits minimum, 11 digits maximum, route number and “intl” as the call-type (“intl” passes the string just as dialed, disregarding any prefix mark in the route).
Again, Margo, thanks very much for sharing this with us, and if you missed my point about sending calls to the public switched network, I'm guessing I didn't communicate that clearly enough and that many more folks missed it too. Your well detailed explanation will clear that up for me in my next column, and I thank you for it.