

Definity-G(x) Demystified:
By Walt Medak

Q: We are trying to budget and predict the life of our Definity and Intuity for the long term. Is there any reliable timetable for estimating their effective life expectancies? We have a Definity G3V8 that has been upgraded from a G-1 about three or four years ago, and an Intuity Release 5.0 that replaced an Audix-Small about two years ago.

A: The fact you started with a Definity-G1 and an Audix-Small tells me that you've been using the Definity architecture since at least the late 1980's. Notice that it's been fifteen years or more that you've been served by this system. Also notice that just about all of the equipment that was installed with your original system is still in use in your current system. If you, like most companies using the Definity system, are a fairly static institution with normal telecommunications requirements, it's my opinion that this system will serve you very well for at least the next five years, and probably well beyond. Even if you experience explosive growth, there is a marketplace for obtaining similar or upgrade equipment even though the OEM has ceased support for anything pre-V7. And there will be companies supporting those versions as long as there is a market, which I believe will last a long, long time. Though the new "bleeding edge" technology gets all the high-profile notoriety, there are thousands of pre-V7 systems still operating very well with their company's intentions of remaining there long-term. Unless you are a large Call-Center or such with very sophisticated Computer/Telephony integration requirements, the V8 will serve just about anything for which you'll probably come up with a need. You already have the ability to use IP trunking if your Dialtone Provider comes out with a "deal" you just can't pass up. And with a small upgrade to V9.5 you can utilize IP telephones with your Definity, though because of the fact you probably already have your in-house telephone network in place, I don't see much reason for it. V8 can also make use of IP phones, but not with the reliability of the V9.5 and higher releases. Certainly, every case is unique, but for the greater number of small, medium, and even large companies, there will be many years of life left in these systems without sacrificing any technological benefits. With the care you'd grant any computer system, the Definity and Intuity systems will last after many of today's System Administrators have retired. When your computer network is down, you may hear a few mutters, gripes and comments of how it has happened *again*..... what's the climate in your office when the phone system goes down? These systems are built tough, and with normal preventative maintenance plans, unless you have a budget burning a hole in your pocket and nowhere else to spend it, you won't need to worry for quite awhile.

Q: We are going to connect a new production facility to our corporate office with both our computer and telephony networks. The two locations are twelve miles apart, so we'll be utilizing T-1's for that connectivity. My question is, what are the benefits of EPN over a new Definity utilizing DCS or vice-versa?

A: It's my opinion, that if at all possible install a new system instead of installing an EPN. Now, that will take a bit of research to see if the benefits outweigh the costs. There is additional software licensing if you install a new Definity at the production facility. But then, there is a considerable expense in upgrading your existing switch to a Definity-G3R Center Stage switch, which is what will be necessary to utilize T-1 to tie an EPN to the main node. You didn't mention the version of your Definity, and since you are considering utilizing T-1, I'll assume you understand that it requires, and that you have a G3R. I'll also assume your new production facility doesn't require a G3R, and that a G3si will suffice. Those assumptions being correct, you will benefit in a variety of ways by installing a G3si, redundancy of network connectivity being one of the major ones. If you were to lose the system at the corporate office, and only had an EPN at the production facility, they would both be down, but if the production facility had a G3si, it would still be operational. And if either one of them lost connectivity to the Public Switched Network, the connectivity between them would allow them both to utilize either's PSN facilities. Even the DID scheme could use each as a backup for the other. These redundancies, plus the "automatic" Disaster Relief factor built-in make the DCS option head-and-shoulders above the EPN. The production facility can even utilize the voicemail/call-accounting systems at the corporate office. Conversely, again only in my opinion, there is nothing, save only one system to program, beneficial to the EPN over the DCS option.