Definity-G(x) Demystified:
By Walt Medak

Q: We are told by our dealer that in order for us to be able to get ISDN-PRI opened in our Definity's software, we will need to upgrade from our G3V4 to G3V11. We know other Definity users who have V4 that have ISDN-PRI working in their system. What is our V4 missing that theirs isn't?

A: The fact that your question is a bit leading, I'm going to guess you already know the answer to your question….. your Definity is missing nothing that others have in regards to ISDN-PRI. I'm finding it hard to believe, but this is something I have heard over and over for the past year or two. It would seem that when the V6 and lower versions of Definity were abandoned by the OEM's support, they were abandoned to all support, including just the activation of software that inherently exists in those versions as well. If that is indeed the case, their aggressive marketing strategy is going to force you to where you would have no other choice but to upgrade as they require…… unless you were to source a system on the secondary market that had ISDN-PRI as part of it's activated features, and programmed it to match your current system. It's my understanding that if you do this, the OEM will not support it, but since they've already discontinued that support, moot point, 'ay what?

Q: Our Definty is getting a bit dated, and we would like to upgrade to a later version. Before we do, we'd like to know a couple of things we're going to experience. Will we have to replace the whole system in going to the new IP version, and if so, does that mean all of the telephones as well? Understanding this will dictate our upgrading to the latest-and-greatest or to just jump a few versions higher than we are now on the secondary market.

A: I have revised my opinion of the IP (Multivantage) switch (though my favorite version if IP isn't necessary is V9.5). Over the past couple of releases, the OEM has succeeded in ridding the system of the bugs that plagued it during it's initial phases. It seems much more stable, and the idea that it can be released on an existing LAN seems to have been revised, as it seems to mostly have continued use on it's own "LAN", the good-ol' standard Cat5, 5E or 6 telephone house-wiring, unless introduced on single-mode fiber. That doesn't mean that I think everybody should now upgrade to it, as I don't think it serves any purpose unless you are going to utilize the IP functionality, and there's still just a few applications where that makes sense. But, as I have always maintained, IP telephony is where we are all headed eventually, and if you have the budget to upgrade now and might not in the future, that would be reason enough in my opinion. The Definity "Server" (PBX in plain language) can be modified to utilize the S8700 (Multivantage) as it's Processing Element, and all of your other circuit packs and telephones (they like to call them Voice Terminals) would remain functional as they currently are. You can be living on the Bleeding-Edge of Technology and dabble in the IP world without jeopardizing the tried-and-true telephony of the good ol' Definity. About the only downside I can think of would be you will be limiting yourself to support of the newer system, as most technicians are not current on Multivantage support. But then, you shouldn't rely on support that isn't keeping up with technology anyway. Check

out your support company to make sure it's capable of handling the new system, and if not, before proceeding, consider what you'll do for that support after upgrading.

Q: What's behind my change of opinion of IP? (Not really, but it makes a good story)

A: I'm sitting aboard my boat, at the dock, after a successful salmon fishing trip out on the ocean out of Westport, Washington writing this column, as I have a LAN aboard that's connected to the wireless internet connection at this marina. Without IP, I would have to be doing this in my office. All of a sudden, IP is a wonderful thing, don't you think?