Definity-G(x) Demystified:
By Walt Medak

Q: We have just been informed by our long-distance provider that we are getting a large number of calls from a foreign country, some with very long call durations. They have told us to check to see if we are being used as a switching center for these calls, sending them out of our system to various points in this country. Where do we begin?

A: There are many ways these clever people have discovered to gain entry to PBX systems and back out again to make long-distance calls at your expense. The most obvious protections deny the transfer of calls that come into a system to go back out without at least human intervention. Convenient means have been programmed into your system to allow you to be able to transfer yourselves through, but it leaves you vulnerable to thieves, just like leaving valuables in your unlocked car. You need to make sure you lock your system, and don't leave any keys where hackers can find them easily. First of all determine whether your system needs any automated capability to transfer incoming calls back out. If not, eliminate trunk-to-trunk transfer in the "system-parameters features" screen. If you do need some activity in and back out, utilize COS and COR restricted trunk groups accessed via Remote Access that is controlled with restrictive COR's and long "barrier codes", AND utilized "account codes". Also, much of the toll fraud is accomplished via Voice Mail systems. In the AUDIX make sure you have "enhanced call transfer" selected or set to "yes". Most of all, have your system reviewed by a consultant who specializes in toll fraud. Lucent offers a great toll-fraud protection program, though I'm not sure if it's only for their maintenance clients.

Q: Our Least Cost Routing, or ARS as Lucent terms it, seems to have some "bugs" in it. We make calls that return fast-busy signals or recordings that utilize the same route patterns as calls that go out successfully. Are we omitting something, or are there "bugs" in ARS?

A: It sounds as if you are making the proper comparisons to successful calls, so I'll assume you know how to utilize the ARS fairly well. The fast busy's could be coming from your system or the public network. If you are certain they are coming from the public network, and never have problems with other than the area code or prefix you are trying, your problem is most likely with the programming in your local or long-distance providers' systems. I have never experienced a properly programmed ARS having problems other than on the public network, and feel that there are no "bugs" in your system.