July 10, 2008

Dear fellow call center professionals…

We need your help!

As you know, the FCC is considering a change to the way in which the federal Universal Service Fund (FUSF) is calculated (WCB docket 06-122). The proposed change would have a dramatic and detrimental effect on the **telephone answering service** industry.

With this new telephone numbers-based system, each of us will have to pay our carriers a FUSF fee for each and every telephone number we have. The initial rate currently being discussed is about $1.60 per telephone number per month. If you have 500 or 1000 DID telephone numbers, you can see that this fee will dramatically inflate your telephone bills and place an unfair burden on the entire telephone answering service industry.

The news gets worse: a recent proposal to the Texas PUC in a Texas law journal proposed assessing that state's Universal Service Fund the same way (`www.trolp.org/main_pgs/issues/v12n1.htm`). The initial proposed rate in Texas was $1.93 per telephone number. If the federal and Texas plans were both adopted, the combined payments per telephone number per month could be $3.53 per telephone number for telephone answering service providers in Texas! As we all know, opportunities to increase taxes and assessments do not go unnoticed by other states. Kansas is also eying another overhaul of their state universal service fund, and you can be assured that many states will follow suit.

And the latest news is even worse: at least one stakeholder now indicates other telecom fees and subsidies could also be converted to a per-telephone number basis including E9-1-1, Telecom Relay Services for the hearing impaired (TRS), Local Number Portability (LNP) fees, etc.

ATSI is fighting back - and the good news is our industry can win this battle!

To support our work on your behalf at the FCC and on Capitol Hill, we've created a simple survey. The anonymous data collected through this survey will help ATSI prepare and propose alternative contribution methodologies for our industry.

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey. This data is vital to our fight and in making our arguments at the FCC.

Please keep in mind, if you fail to participate in this survey, any ruling the FCC makes will not reflect the needs of businesses like yours.

Also please understand that this data is confidential and your individual input is anonymous. ATSI and the FCC will only work with aggregate data – not individual data.

The survey is for the entire industry, not just ATSI members. ATSI speaks for the entire telephone answering service industry; no other association in our industry does this.

Please take the time to give us the statistical weapons we need to fight this battle for our industry: please complete the enclosed survey immediately.

Yours truly,

Dennis O'Hara
ATSI President, 2008-2009

ATSI FCC Survey III
Worksheet with Instructions

To simplify participation in the survey, we've created this worksheet. This worksheet shows each question from the web survey and provides some explanatory information and instructions. We suggest you complete the worksheet, and then enter your responses from this worksheet at the ATSI website: **www.atsi.org/FUSF**. (If you are uncomfortable entering data on a web page, you may fax your completed worksheet to: 206-350-4912 and ATSI staff will enter your data for you.)

Overview

This survey is designed for Telephone Answering Service providers who use many telephone numbers – generally more than 100 – to receive and identify calls from subscribers. The survey is in three parts.

The first part of the survey focuses on your telephone bill(s).

Most telephone answering service providers will have one or two groups of trunks for receiving calls and one system for distributing the calls to personnel to answer them. (We use the term "trunks" to mean analog or digital service or even VoIP SIP "trunking" channels.)

As you glance through the first part of the survey worksheet, you will quickly see how the questions focus on a single group of trunks on a single phone bill. If you need to break down your response by trunk group or by phone bill, make extra copies of the first part of the survey worksheet and complete each set separately.

The first part of the web survey repeats to include as many trunk groups as you need - up to twelve sets of inbound trunks on a single system. (Please contact ATSI in the unlikely event that you have more than twelve sets of inbound trunks on a single system.)

The second part of the survey focuses on your system (switch) statistics. It is only a single question.

Most telephone answering service providers have only one system (switch). If your company has MORE than one system (switch) for answering calls, please complete the entire survey (parts 1, 2 and 3) for each such system. (For example, if you have separate offices and systems (switches) in different locations, complete the survey for each office/system (switch).)

If you don't already use this data for billing, you may want to consult with your user group, or system vendor, or another company that uses the same system that you do, to learn how to look up the information requested. This question is very important, and it will help ATSI establish for the FCC that telephone numbers in our industry use the telephone network far, far less than the average business, residential or wireless telephone number.

The third part of the survey (one question) simply asks which industry associations your company belongs to.

If you find that you are unable to answer any question in the survey, please answer as many as you can. Incomplete information is preferable to none.

If you have questions about completing the survey, please contact ATSI by calling **1-866-896-ATSI**.

First Part

The 12 questions below apply to a SINGLE set of trunks on a SINGLE telephone bill.

>NOTE: Make as many copies of this worksheet as you need.

PLEASE USE THIS PRINTED WORKSHEET TO GATHER THE NEEDED INFORMATION FROM YOUR PHONE BILL(S). The worksheet makes this survey easy and fast.

1. The telephone company that sends this bill is a(n):

○ ILEC (Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier)　　　　○ IXC (Long Distance Company)
○ CLEC (Competitive Local Exchange Carrier)　　　○ VoIP (Interconnected VoIP Provider)

>NOTE: Just check one. It is not unusual today for local exchange carriers to also provide long distance, including toll free telephone numbers, on the same phone bill.

2. The trunks on this bill are best described as:

○ Analog DID　　　　　○ VoIP SIP Trunking　　　　　○ ISDN BRI (2B+D)
○ Digital DID (T-1)　　○ Dedicated Toll (8xx) Trunks　○ ISDN PRI (23B+D)

>NOTE: Just check one. If you are working from a telephone bill that includes several kinds of service, please complete a copy of this worksheet for each individual kind of service.

3. Please select one answer per row:

	Yes	No	I don't know
We use these same trunks for both inward AND outward calls (2 way trunks):	○	○	○
These trunks are provisioned by the telco for use by paging carriers:	○	○	○
These trunks are tariffed for data, not voice use:	○	○	○

>NOTE: Just check one circle per row.

4. On these trunks, our switch identifies which subscriber each call is for by (you may choose more than one answer):

☐ DID digits (One subscriber per DID number)

☐ the ISDN "redirected number" field (Many subscribers forward calls to a single number.)

>NOTE: Check one or both boxes as applicable. While almost everyone completing this survey uses DID digits to identify calls, some may also use the ISDN "redirected number" field to also provide "One Number Call Forwarding". (Check DID digits if you are using DNIS digits on dedicated 8xx toll trunks.)

5. How many telephone *numbers* ON THIS BILL are assigned TO YOU BY THIS TELCO?

Local #s

Toll Free (8xx) #s

>NOTE: Enter the quantity of telephone numbers on this bill. For example, if you have five blocks of one hundred numbers, enter "500".

6. How many telephone *numbers* ON THIS BILL are assigned BY YOU TO YOUR SUBSCRIBERS?

Local #s

Toll Free (8xx) #s

>NOTE: This question is different from #5 above! Enter the quantity of telephone numbers that are assigned by you to your clients. For example, if you entered "500" for #5 above, you may only have 300 of the 500 assigned to your clients at present.

7. How many *trunks* ON THIS BILL are associated with the telephone numbers above?

Trunks

>NOTE: This question is NOT about telephone numbers, it is about "trunks" or voice channels. Each full T-1 has 24 voice channels (although you may not have all 24 voice channels activated by your telco). A full ISDN PRI has 23 voice channels (although you may not have all 23 channels activated by your telco). Just enter the quantity of actual "trunks" or voice channels your telco has activated. Another way to think about this is the quantity of simultaneous calls this trunk group will support.

8. The average total monthly FIXED charges I pay for the #s and trunks above is...

$ [   ]

>NOTE: Enter the sum of all charges you pay each month for the telephone numbers <u>and</u> trunks above. These should only be "fixed" charges and should exclude usage charges for toll or local service. Also, exclude all taxes, fees and assessments except the "SLC" or "Subscriber Line Charge" for each trunk.

9. The average monthly VARIABLE USAGE charges I pay for the #s and trunks above is...

Local inward usage charges - $ [   ]

Inward toll on 8xx #s above - $ [   ]

>NOTE: Enter the sum of all "variable usage" charges you pay for the telephone numbers and trunks above. These are typically only usage charges for toll or local service. (If these trunks are in a flat-rate local usage area, you may not pay local usage charges.)

10. The average monthly Universal Service Fund charges I pay for the #s and trunks above is...

Federal USF charges - $ [   ]

State USF charges - $ [   ]

>NOTE: Enter the amounts you can find on this bill labeled "Universal Service Fund" or similar. Note that you may be billed for both a federal and state USF – enter the amounts separately in the boxes above. If there are no such amounts, enter the digit zero: "0".

11. If you entered an amount greater than $0 in the State USF box above (skip this question if you entered $0),
what is the two letter postal abbreviation for the state? Example: "NY"

[   ]

>NOTE: Enter the state for which the state USF charge applies.

12. The questions above are related to a single set of trunks on a single phone bill. Is there another set of trunks, or another phone bill?
Click YES to repeat the above questions for another set of trunks or another phone bill.
Click NO to proceed to the final few survey questions.

◯ Yes ◯ No

>NOTE: Question 12 appears on the web survey. If you completed the First Part of this worksheet only one time, click NO. If you made multiple copies of the First Part, click YES until you've entered all the data, then click NO.

Second Part

This page collects one piece of data from your system statistics.

1. Based on statistics from my switch, the total number of minutes ALL of my inbound trunks are in use in an average month is:

Minutes

>NOTE: Enter the sum minutes of all activities that use the incoming trunks on this switch, including talk time, ring time, hold time, patch time, voice mail time, etc.   Minutes should only be for incoming traffic.

Third Part

This pages gathers statistics about industry association membership to help us understand who is responding to the survey.

1. Please indicate any industry associations you are currently a member of, or of which you used to be a member.

	Current Member	Former Member
ATSI	○	○
ATA	○	○
DMA	○	○
CAM-X	○	○
ASTAA	○	○
GLTSA	○	○
SATAS	○	○
STA	○	○
TSAT	○	○
WSTA	○	○
CEO	○	○
NAEO	○	○
PIN	○	○
SNUG	○	○
TUG	○	○
TUNe	○	○

That was the last question! Ready to submit your anonymous survey?

ATSI – Association of TeleServices International (telemessaging)
ATA – American Teleservices (telemarketing) Association
DMA – Direct Marketing Association
CAM-X – Canadian Call Management Association

ASTAA – Atlantic States Telephone Answering Association
GLTSA – Great Lakes Telemessaging Services Association
SATAS – Southwestern Association of Telephone Answering Services
STA – Southern Telemessaging Association
TSAT – Telemessaging Services Association of Texas
WSTA – Western States Telemessaging Association

CEO – CadCom Equipment Owners
NAEO – National Amtelco Equipment Owners
PIN – Professional Inbound Network
SNUG – Startel National Users Group
TUG – Tascom Users Group
TUNe – Telescan Users Network