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Date: Jan 2, 2007 8:34 AM
Subject: ISP Consultation Paper-Portability of e-mail address
To: skgupta@trai.gov.in
Cc: guptask61@gmail.com, naavi <naavi@vsnl.com>

Dear Sir,

I would like to place the following suggestion for consideration of TRAI:

1. At present most ISPs are providing e-mail service bundled with Internet access service. When a consumer changes his access service provider, he therefore loses his e-mail identity.
2. E-Mail address is a digital identity for Netizens and users would have built a brand around it. Many users would have obtained digital signature certificates attached to an e-mail address. Some e-mail addresses might have been registered for e-governance applications as part of citizen identity. Changing the e-mail address is therefore inconvenient and expensive besides causing some legal problems in e-contracts.
3. The choices now available to the user is to keep an old access service only to preserve his e-mail ID. This is an expensive proposition.
4. Even when a user opts to keep an access service only for the purpose of his e-mail ID and starts using another access service, he is put to operational inconvenience since most e-mail providers do not provide SMTP access except when logged in to their access service. Simultaneously the internet service provider blocks access of his customers to his sister ISP's SMTP server

eg: VSNL dial up customer cannot access @vsnl.com smtp server when logged in under Airtel broadband service . WiFi or mobile internet service or when he uses different ISPs at home and office.

This situation occurs when a dial up customer switches to broadband or

5. Though the service providers justify such blocking as "Blocking of Spam Attempts", there is no logic for blocking a paid customer of VSNL to access his SMTP service just because he logs in from another access service. This is actually an attempt to prevent customers of one access service to use another ISP's e-mail service.
6. I suggest that suitable action has to be initiated for introducing "e-mail address portability" across different Internet access providers. To achieve this, following options are feasible

- a) E-Mail Service may be unbundled from internet access service and a customer should be permitted to hold his e-mail service even when he wants to move away from the Internet access service. Appropriate pricing can be fixed for e-mail only service
 - b) Customers who opt to hold either the e-mail service or the entire ISP service of one customer and also use another ISP should be provided a "Free Forwarding of e-mails" and "Free use of SMTP service" even when logged in from other ISPs. If required, an Inter service connectivity charge can be made on the other ISP when a customer of one ISP tries to access e-mail servers of another ISP. (Similar to mobile service)
- Consumer may be charged only if he opts to maintain the POP service requiring the storage space. Use of SMTP service may be a mandatory service support which each ISP may give to another.

Advantages: This system besides helping customers to preserve a single digital ID even when they use multiple service providers also enables individual ISPs specializing in different services. For example, smaller ISPs who are providing only the dial up service and losing viability of their business may switch to specialized e-mail services. These POP based e-mail services may be developed on the lines of Yahoo mail or gmail and also provide support to the digital signature system that India has adopted.

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