

This plan, as outlined in the letter of October 8, 1999, is fine up to a point. But with regards at least to points 7, 8 and 9 this plan falls well short.

Point 7 concerns the ease with which consumers can place a call. Currently, I must place almost every call to a new number two or three times. Once with a "1" and then again without it. About half of the time the system tells me again that I must redial with a "1", or vice-versa. It drives me crazy.

Point 8 regards the burden on business and consumers that have automatic dialing devices. I have an automatic dialing device. The caller ID on my phone stores 40 numbers. I can automatically return a call by recalling it and pressing "redial". However, my phone reads the area code of the incoming call and adds a "1" to all calls outside of my area code. I live in the 425 area. About half of the calls I receive from within this area code are long distance (Bellevue) and most of the calls I receive from outside this area code (Seattle) are local. My automatic dialing device is useless.

Point 9 relates to the ease of a child placing a call. I have a six year old who has learned his area code. But I don't think he could cope with the frustration I expressed in reference to point 7 above. If he had to learn to always dial "1" first, he could do it. But the back and forth "sometimes I need it and sometimes I don't" would cause him to feel he was unequal to the task and I am sure that he would stop trying to call.

While I understand the need for more phone numbers, I have a concern with the way the ten-digit dialing is being implemented.

I would like the commission to consider the possibility of permitting 11-digit dialing. I wish that I could dial "1-area code-phone number" whether the call is long distance or not. I know that the phone system can tell when the number I am dialing is long distance because it stops me and tells me to dial a "1". I know that the system can also tell when the number I am calling is local because it stops me and tells me not to dial a "1".

I want to be able to dial the "1" and let the phone system decide whether or not it needs it, and then put the call through and charge me the appropriate rate, local or long distance, without stopping my call at all. I am willing to place long distance phone calls without knowing that the call I am making is long distance. For those who need to know, they may use the ten-digit dialing format (or 7-digit format) and let the phone system stop their call and tell them to dial a 1. Then they could decide whether they want to pay extra for the call or not.

I am usually very willing to make changes and I adapt to them fairly easily. I wouldn't even complain about ten-digit dialing if the regions of local and long distance had some rational, regional basis. But, I live in Woodinville. Bellevue is long distance, but Seattle is not. Snohomish might be long distance, so might the Edmonds-south Snohomish Co. area. Or it might not. It makes no intuitive sense and I end up dialing and dialing and dialing. This problem will just be compounded with another "overlay".

Let me dial every number as if it is long distance and let the phone systems sort it out. Please.

Good luck with this sticky problem and best regards,

Pat Atkinson

cc: Representative Laura Ruderman