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AT&T-Intrado E911 Deal Sign of Things to Come in VOIP World

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By Robyn Weisman

Last week AT&T Corp. announced its selection of emergency solutions provider Intrado Inc. to provide some of its CallVantage subscribers with E911 services. Intrado will deploy its V9-1-1SM Mobility Service so that "nomadic users," whose telephone area codes do not correspond to the local rate center, will still have their 911 calls routed to the appropriate public system answering point.

CallVantage, AT&T's VOIP (voice over IP) offering, faces the same overriding issue as its VOIP competitors. By Nov. 28, it must adhere to the Federal Communications Commission's mandate for E911 services. Lisa Pierce, vice president of U.S. telecommunications services at Forrester Research, said that Kevin Martin, the current FCC commissioner, will not offer amnesty for providers that do not have E911 services in place by that deadline.

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VOIP providers are preparing for the FCC's E911 deadline. [Click here](#) to read more.

According to Pierce, the means in which VOIP providers will go about obtaining E911 services for their subscribers will vary because each provider's infrastructure varies; however, at the very least, VOIP providers can resort to ILEC (incumbent local exchange carrier) trumping services to comply.

AT&T is not unique in selecting Intrado to help it with the Nov. 28 mandate. Intrado has maintained a huge presence in the public safety space since its inception in 1979, according to IDC Research Manager William Stofega.

Over the last 25 years, Intrado has amassed a database with over 206 million records with ILECs across the United States and has deals with 37 CLECs (competitive local exchange carriers), said Stofega. These records, along with the technologies that Intrado has developed in this rather arcane space, places the Boulder, Colo., company in an ideal position to aid CallVantage and others in the VOIP space in providing E911 services.

Marcus Andronici, product manager for VOIP 911 at Intrado, said the company is going beyond the simple routing engine and database management offerings for its customers.

"We take an extra step [by] delivering back to the 911 network on their behalf. Small and medium-sized providers have to figure out how to get into the 911 network—they need to negotiate with all the different ILECs. We deliver all the aspects, including delivery and access enhancement in one comprehensive solution for them," Andronici said.

To elucidate what he meant, Andronici offered the example of a VOIP customer located in Pennsylvania who goes to visit the house of his mother-in-law in Brooklyn. The user sets up his portal, notifies his VOIP of his temporary address, and should he have to make a 911 call, Intrado can validate from an address standpoint, perform geocoding and route it to the right PSAP (public safety answering point).

Intrado routes the 911 calls on dedicated lines, much like the wireline world. "The E911 aspect to it is that we go beyond delivering and validating data to delivering the call itself," Andronici said.

Back in early July, Intrado set up a state-of-the-art service with its V9-1-1SM Mobility Service in New York City on behalf of CallVantage and other VOIP providers. At the same time, Andronici is aware that VOIPs are at the mercy of a large number of dependencies that will make rolling out a comprehensive nationwide service challenging.

"It requires cooperation from a number of different folks," said Andronici.

For his part, IDC's Stofega said that the 911 setup in many parts of the country is a disaster, in part because they are funded at a local rather than a national level.

"New York City may have the latest and greatest. Meanwhile, in Davenport, Iowa, it's crummy. It comes down to what the municipality can afford," Stofega said.

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