

MPHPT

February 12, 2004, Vol. 14, No. 21

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COMMUNICATIONS NEWS

Biweekly Newsletter of the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Japan

Readiness of Telecommunications Business for Ensuring Important Telecommunications During Natural Disasters, Etc.

-- Progress in Implementation of Measures Based on Report from "Study Group for Ensuring Important Telecommunications in the Telecommunications Business" --

MPHPT in July 2003 released a report from the "Study Group for Ensuring Important Telecommunications in the Telecommunications Business" (the Important Telecommunications Study Group; for short) recommending measures for ensuring important telecommunications. Since then, considering the earthquake off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture in May 2003, MPHPT has been compiling urgent measures to be adopted by telecommunications carriers.

In line with the recommendations, telecommunications carriers have been introducing countermeasures against disasters, for ensuring important telecommunications through individual and/or concerted efforts. For instance, telecommunications carriers including mobile communications carriers, etc. have been introducing or developing countermeasures individually, or cooperatively through coordination of carrier activities at the Council for Safety and Reliability*.

* The Council for Safety and Reliability: A council established for ensuring safety/reliability of telecommunications systems through coordinated efforts among telecommunications carriers, and consists of 16 telecommunications carriers. Its secretariat is located within the Telecommunications Carriers Association.

For example, considering the fact that during the earthquake off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture, traffic for mobile telephones was extremely congested, mobile telephone carriers have been introducing strong countermeasures against air traffic congestion. At the Council for Safety and Reliability, with the purpose of ensuring communications for an inquiry after someone's well being while relaxing traffic congestion, telecommunications carriers (including mobile communications carriers) have been deliberating upon awareness campaigns for making the most of the "Nationwide-use Emergency Voice Mail 171." To this end, in collaboration with mass media, coordinated efforts by telecommunications carriers to let the people know of "171" voice mail services even during regular time have been made.

Major efforts implemented by them to ensure important telecommunications are as follows:

I. Major efforts implemented by carriers to ensure important telecommunications

1. Major efforts implemented by them to ensure important telecommunications

In order to ensure important telecommunications during disasters, since the recommendations proposed by the report

from the Important Telecommunications Study Group, mobile communications carriers have been taking the following

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countermeasures:

- 1) Measures for ensuring emergency reports and important communications from mobile terminals
 - i) Measures for treating emergency reports as priority communications in air sections

In order to ensure emergency reports from mobile terminals during traffic congestion, it is expected that emergency reports can be barely controlled even in air sections.

NTT DoCoMo, Inc., Vodafone K.K. and TU-KA Group have already introduced new terminals that enable emergency reports to be transmitted without control (as for 3G terminal equipment, NTT DoCoMo and Vodafone plan to introduce them in or after FY2004). KDDI will introduce 3G terminals in the spring of 2004.

- ii) Effective communications control measures for ensuring emergency reports and important communications

When a large-scale disaster occurs, the degree of packet traffic congestion is generally lower than that of voice communications. Thus, it is effective for the control of packet communications to be based upon an independent control rate from other communications as to the purpose of attaining a higher rate of complete mail calls.

NTT DoCoMo in April 2004 will introduce functions for enabling independent communications control on voice and packets on a separate basis (for the time being, effective only for 2G terminals; as for 3G, DoCoMo will propose a change to international standard specifications.). KDDI will follow in the spring of 2005.

- 2) Measures for an inquiry after someone's well being; Measures for relaxing traffic congestion
 - i) Measures for an inquiry after someone's safety utilizing the Internet and e-mails

Upon traffic congestion during disasters, etc., it is effective for general users to use the Internet or e-mails that are comparatively tolerant against traffic congestion, so as to ensure inquiries after someone's well being.

NTT DoCoMo launched the "i-mode Disaster Dengon Mail" in January 2004. KDDI has been developing a similar system for inquiring after someone's safety.

- ii) Measures for relaxing traffic con-

gestion

Upon traffic congestion, because of the control covering general voice calls in order to ensure important communications, calls for inquiries after someone's well being can barely be completed. Thus, in order to make the most of the "Nationwide-use Emergency Voice Mail (171)," it is effective for a voice guidance to be announced to lead callers upon use of the 171 service. NTT DoCoMo will introduce voice guidance for encouraging callers to use the "i-mode Disaster Dengon Mail" and the "Nationwide-use Emergency Voice Mail (171)." Other carriers will follow suit.

2. Efforts to carry out awareness campaigns on methods for use of telephones in cases of disaster, etc.

In response to the recommendations from the Important Telecommunications Study Group, the Council for Safety and Reliability established a working group on guidelines for important telecommunications with the purpose of compiling methods for general users to use telephones during a disaster, etc., that are to be widely known during regular time. The outcomes of the working group will be released to mass media and general users.

- 1) Content of methods to use telephones in cases of disaster, etc.
 - i) Catch phrase
 - For general subscribers: Your "No

call" will spare emergency communications in disaster-stricken areas.

- For organizations engaged in disaster relief, etc.: Do you know? "Priority telephone sets to be used in disaster, etc."
 - ii) "On methods to use telephones when an earthquake, etc. occurs"
- 2) Concrete methods for awareness campaigns

Taking opportunities of the "Disaster Prevention and Volunteer Week (January 15 - 22)," the Telecommunications Carriers Association (TCA) announced a news release concerning the methods (January 13, 2004), and the following measures were taken:

- i) Posting of the "On methods of using telephones when an earthquake, etc. occurs" on the websites of TCA and TCA Member Companies. Those sites include links to "How to Use Nationwide-use Emergency Voice Mail (171)."
- ii) Proposal to mass media, etc. on methods to use telephones when earthquake, etc. occurs
 - The Council made proposals to NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corp.), the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the Japan Cable and Telecommunications Association on methods for use of telephones when an earthquake, etc. occurs (January 6 and 7).

II. "On methods for use of telephones when an earthquake, etc. occurs"

Upon occurrence of disasters, such as earthquakes, accidents, etc., if a huge number of calls concentrate within a disaster-stricken area, telephone calls will hardly be completed. Because of traffic congestion, inquiries after someone's safety, emergency reports to police and fire departments are being in difficulty.

We, telecommunications carriers, are striving to ensure communications through various methods, including appropriate network control, in addition to offerings of priority telephone sets for relevant organizations, the provision of "Disaster Emergency Dengon Dial 171" services and installation of disaster-resistant temporary public telephones free of charge.

Dear telephone users, in order to efficiently make calls for inquiry after your acquaintances, etc., please be advised that you should use telephones in accordance with the following manners. Thank you for your understanding and assistance.

- 1) The capacity of telecommunications facilities is limited. Please make an efficient but short call.
- 2) When ordinary telephones do not work, please use the "Disaster Emergency Dengon Dial 171" or "Cellular Telephone Mail" services that can relatively withstand traffic congestion.

<http://www.ntt.com/shop/service/dengon/saigai.html>

- 3) With regard to calls from the disaster-stricken area, they may sometimes work.
- 4) It is useful, just in case, to decide in advance a method for inquiring after the safety of your family members and relatives.
- 5) Calls to disaster-stricken areas just after a disaster are hardly connected, because of traffic congestion. In order to ensure smooth emergency calls within disaster-stricken areas, please do not make calls that are not urgent nor make unnecessary redialings. After enough interval, please try again.

Your "No call" will spare emergency calls within disaster-stricken areas.

To fire and police departments, administrative organizations, mass media, etc.!

For people working for fire and police departments, administrative organizations, mass media, etc., priority telephone sets (fixed and mobile telephone terminals to be treated as prioritized communication means in cases of disaster, etc.) will be provided. Please efficiently use these telephones in parallel with other communications means such as leased circuits.

Do you know? The priority telephone sets.

Verification Experiments for Administrative Service Provision via Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting Commenced

MPHPT commenced verification experiments for administrative service provision via terrestrial digital broadcasting. From February 1 to March 14, 2004, these experiments are being carried out to i) verify effectiveness thereof and administrative services that are broadcast, and ii) realize an administrative information provision system through use of data broadcasting and two-way (interactive) functions of terrestrial digital broadcasting. The administrative information provision system will be constructed for local public entities.

[Outline of the verification experiments]

1. Overview

Utilizing the terrestrial digital broadcasting started in December 2003, dur-

ing the verification experiments, i) administrative information, etc. held by local public entities and ii) administrative services, such as reservation for public facilities, are being provided. (See Fig. on the next page)

2. Location

Gifu City, Gifu Prefecture

3. Number of monitor households

About 150

4. Period

43 days (from February 1 to March 14, 2004)

5. Contractor of the verification experiments

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.

6. Broadcaster

Chukyo TV Broadcasting Co., Ltd.

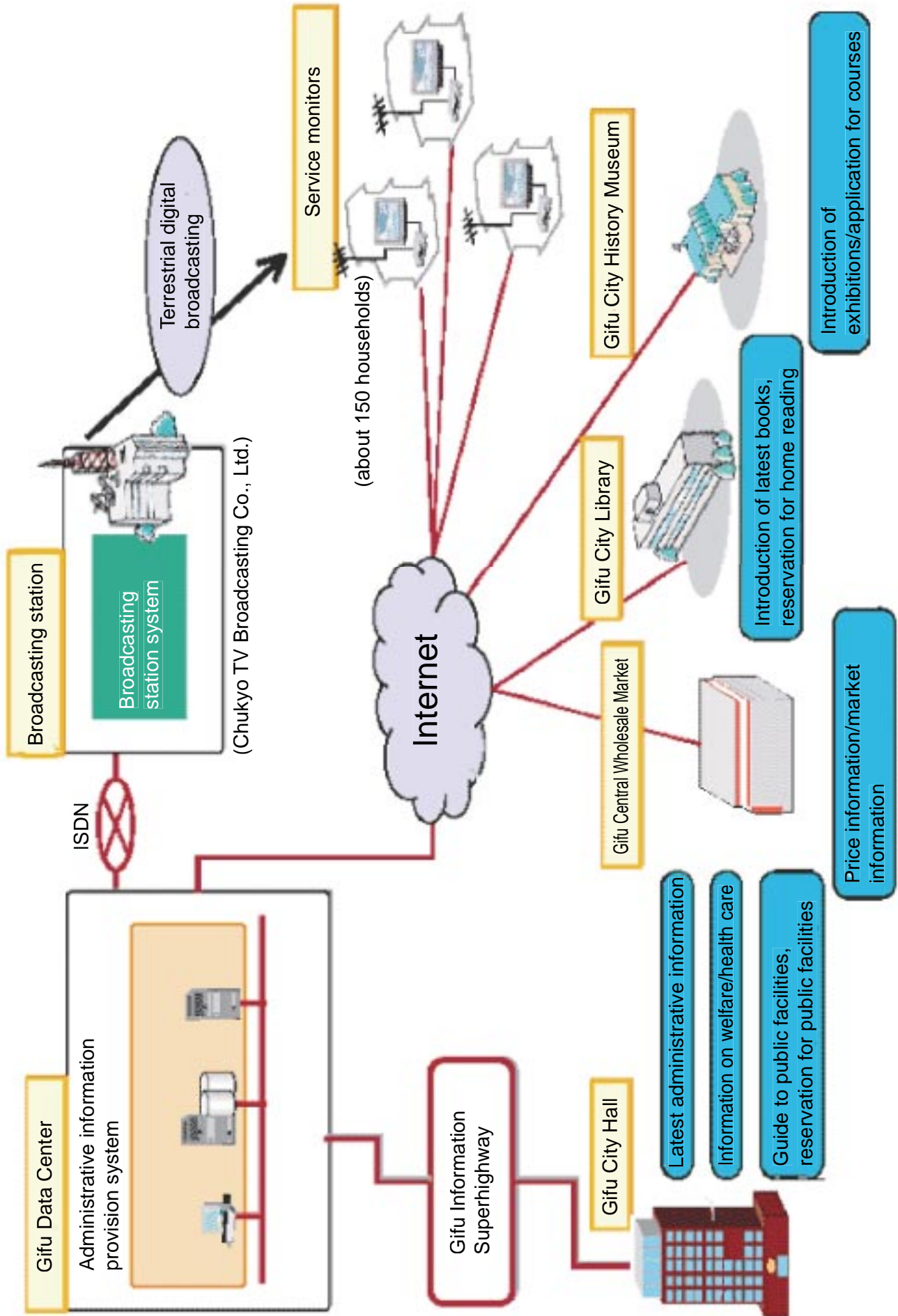
7. Verification Experiments Promotion Council

MPHPT established the Verification Experiments Promotion Council Concerning Provision of Administrative Services Utilizing Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting (Chair: Prof. HATORI Mitsutoshi, National Institute of Informatics) to promote the verification experiments.

The Council is to:

- deliberate upon the verification experiments plan; evaluate/analyze results thereof
- provide information on the verification experiments to the "National Conference for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting," etc.

Fig. Verification experiments set-up



Sixth "Japan-Sweden Policy Dialogue" and "Japan-Sweden Joint Seminar on Regulatory Issues" Held in Tokyo



Mr. Mikael LINDSTRÖM, Ambassador to Japan

With the purposes of i) promoting mutual understanding in the ICT field between Japan and Sweden, and ii) strengthening collaborative relationships between the two countries, MPHPT and the Swedish "National Post and Telecom Agency (PTS)" and the "Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications" held the Sixth Japan-Sweden Policy Dialogue on January 20, 2004, and the "Japan-Sweden Joint Seminar on Regulatory Issues" on January 21. At the two events held in Tokyo, both parties exchanged information on various topics.

At the Policy Dialogue level, both sides exchanged information on "pro-competitive policy," "ICT strategy," "mobile communications," "Internet and ICANN" and "digitalization of terrestrial broadcasting and spectrum trading," among others. The two parties agreed to develop concrete cooperative projects between Japan and Sweden in these fields.

At the Joint Seminar, representatives

of the Japanese and Swedish governments gave keynote speeches and held a panel discussion with people from both the public and private sectors, on appropriate regulatory frameworks, and the

pros and cons thereon in the telecommunications field. The two sides agreed that, in the future, the Japanese and Swedish governments should make further efforts to prepare an ideal competitive environment.

I. Policy Dialogue

[Participants]

Japanese side: Mr. ISHIDA, Director-General, International Affairs Department, MPHPT; and others

Swedish side: Mr. Nils Gunnar BILLINGER; and others

[Results]

1. Pro-competitive policy

The two governments exchanged information and opinions on the amended Telecommunications Business Law of Japan, frameworks for competitive evaluation in the telecommunications field that the two countries are trying to introduce, new Swedish regulatory frameworks including the Electronic Communications Act.

Then, the two sides agreed, from now on, to further promote competition and cooperate in ensuring users' benefit.



Mr. TAKAHARA, Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination (International Affairs), MPHPT

2. ICT strategy

The two parties exchanged information and opinions on Japanese ICT policies, including the "e-Japan Strategy II," and Swedish IT strategies in accordance with the "e-Europe."

Both sides agreed to cooperate in promoting actual use of well-prepared infrastructures, and to continue to exchange opinions for realizing an information society for all.

3. Mobile communications

Both parties exchanged information and opinions on the current status of the 3G mobile communications systems and future perspectives of 4G.

The two sides agreed to promote further cooperation between the two countries, already having been carried out at the Yokosuka Research Park, etc., and to continue to exchange opinions on R&D and standardization.

4. Internet and ICANN

The two sides exchanged information and opinions on major efforts concerning IPv6 and the Internet governance. Then, the two governments agreed to continue to exchange opinions thereon at various international conferences.

Note: Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN); A not-for-profit private organization administering resources over the Internet, such as IP addresses.

5. Digitalization of terrestrial broadcasting and spectrum trading

The two parties exchanged information and opinions on the policies and current status on digitalization of broad-

casting in the two countries. The two agreed to promote further cooperation toward the penetration of digital broadcasting through exchanges of information thereon.

In addition, the two sides exchanged information on basic concepts of the Japanese government on spectrum trading, and the review of Swedish regulatory frameworks for radio spectrums. Both sides agreed that they should make efforts to effectively and efficiently use radio spectrums, and that for realizing a ubiquitous network society, the two countries should cooperate in ensuring frequencies needed for introducing radio systems that comprise such a society.

II. Joint Seminar

[Participants]

Japanese side: Mr. TAKAHARA, Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination (International Affairs), MPHPT; Mr. ARITOMI, Director-General, Telecommunications Bureau; and others

Swedish side: Mr. Nils Gunnar BILLINGER; Mr. Mikael LINDSTRÖM, Ambassador to Japan; and others

[Other participants]

Telecommunications carriers, manufacturers, etc.

[Themes]

"Regulation, or deregulation" (ideal regulatory frameworks)

[Results]

A panel discussion was held concerning the pros and cons on regulations in the telecommunications field. The gov-

ernments of Japan and Sweden provided keynote speeches introducing the current status in the telecommunications field and future trends in regulations in both countries.

At the panel discussion, representatives of the private and public sectors in the two countries actively deliberated upon questions, including "Whether communications policies to date were successful or not?" and "What were the roles of governments?"; one of topics actively deliberated upon was a new service field, such as IP telephony. With respect to such a new field, some participants said, "A market environment of the telecommunications field are being dynamically altered through technological innovations, etc. Thus, governments shall accurately evaluate the service development situations on a country-by-country basis."

During discussions among participants that included the audience, opinions were offered on i) concerns about lowering of the quality of service (QoS) and insufficient customer services, through competition; ii) intergovernmental cooperation on issues concerning SPAMs; iii) significance of selections by market mechanisms; and iv) international harmonization.

At closing, even though solutions for the topic, "regulation or deregulation," are not necessarily simple, those participants agreed that the two countries should expend further efforts to prepare an ideal competitive environment.