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Wireless Portability Conferences Prepare Industry for Future



Above: About 100 industry representatives gather to discuss Wireless Portability in Washington D.C.

Two conferences were recently held to inform and prepare the industry for FCC-mandated wireless portability by November 24, 2002.

On February 5-7, NeuStar was lead sponsor for the "Wireless Number Portability Conference" in Washington, D.C. The conference was designed to assist all wireless carriers in their planning and strategy development for moving towards wireless portability. About 100 people, representing approximately 50 service providers, attended the conference. The Cellular Telephone Industry Association (CTIA) hosted a similar conference in Dallas, January 31-February 1, and was attended by about 240 industry representatives.

One of the focal topics at both conferences was getting carriers – outside the Top 100 MSAs – involved and up-to-speed with wireless portability, especially in terms of separating the Mobile Identification Number (MIN) and Mobile Directory Number (MDN). All wireless carriers – regardless of where they are located – have to be capable of managing the separation of the MIN-MDN, which involves updating their internal systems.

At the DC conference, panel discussions were held regarding open issues in wireless portability and critical milestones for LNP Portability. Wireless carriers connecting to NPAC will begin testing from May through October. In October, carriers will begin inter-carrier testing up until "soft launch" of wireless portability in September 2002. ■

NeuStar's Washington Office Relocates

On January 20, NeuStar's Washington, DC office moved to a new facility, one floor down from its previous location.

Only the suite number has changed: 1120 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005. The phone and fax numbers of all NeuStar staff remain the same. Please make note of the suite number change. ■



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Portability, ink: The Year in Review

It's been one year since NeuStar, Inc., which serves the telecommunications industry as the Local Number Portability Administrator (LNPA), launched the Portability, ink. newsletter. Publication of Portability, ink., designed to provide relevant, interesting and topical information on issues related to the LNP, began in January 2000. Over the last year, NeuStar and its LNP customers, including service providers, LLCs, and regulatory groups, have seen tremendous growth and changes in the industry, especially in terms of LNP. The following timeline reflects the work that has taken place in the last year, as reported in Portability, ink. As we move into the future, NeuStar remains committed to the telecommunications industry and our LNP customers to better serve your needs.

January/February issue

The inaugural issue of Portability, ink., was distributed to more than 1,000 customers and interested parties. Response has been very positive.

The seven Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs) within the NPAC consolidated to form the North American Portability Management (NAPM), LLC.

Shortcuts to popular pages of the www.npac.com web site were listed, including information on cross regional meetings, the LNPA working group, and NPAC methods and procedures for SPs.

NPAC's Help Desk staff was profiled.

NeuStar implements a billing and collection system that not only sets a high standard of customer service, but also raises the bar to a new level.

March/April issue

On March 31, the FCC released its NRO Order, which addresses various number resource issues, including: standardized utilization reporting requirements and definitions of number category usage. The Order also states that the National Thousands-Block Pooling Administrator will be selected through a competitive bid process.

NeuStar is in the process of developing Release 4.0, the next major enhancement to the NPAC/SMS. The SOW process for Release 4.0 is different from the other SOWs that were produced in the past.

NeuStar's Technical Operations group in Chicago is profiled.

Joe Franlin, NeuStar's Senior Vice President of Operations, pays tribute to Roger Marshall, who passed away March 10, 2000. Marshall, who worked at Ameritech, was a leader in the development of LNP for the telecommunications industry, and a longtime friend of NeuStar's.

NPAC starts Customer Survey to gauge their satisfaction with the service provided by the NPAC Help Desk in regards to responding to customer issues and assess the Help Desk's ability to meet customer needs.

The testing process within the NPAC is explained in terms of Release 3.0, including Interoperability Testing, Turn-up Testing, Regression Testing and LTI Testing.

The User Support Analysts (USAs) at the NPAC are featured.

May/June issue

NPAC reports on its Performance Study update, which was initiated to investigate the sudden increase of Invalid Departure Time (IDT) aborts and the NPAC Retry Timer setting.

The Billing User Group (BUG) was formed to establish a forum to discuss billing issues and resolve LNP-related billing issues. The group holds monthly conference calls, which continue today.

A status update of the SOWs currently in progress at NeuStar was highlighted, including SOW 15 – Release 3.0; SOW 17 – Performance Measurements; SOW 20 – Release 4.0; SOW 21 – NANC 301 (TCP/IP Heartbeat); and SOW 22 – Release 4.0 for Canada.

July/August issue

Effective with Release 3.0, all NPAC Users must certify their system (i.e., perform a minimum set of tests) through the Continuing Certification Process (CCP). This ensures that LNP network will continue to operate at the best available level.

A new position was created within the NPAC Help Desk – Customer Technical Specialist (CTS) – to handle more complex technical issues during the initial call from customers.

NeuStar enhances Performance Measurement System to include 75 measures to monitor LNPA performance.

In another effort to improve customer service, NeuStar implemented four separate customer surveys focusing on Billing and Collections, the NPAC Help Desk, Training, and Industry Representations. The purpose is to sample a cross-section of NeuStar's customer base and solicit their thoughts and suggestions regarding the different services NeuStar provides.

September/October issue

As part of its continuing process improvement program, NeuStar began exploring "FutureSearch," as a conference format designed to work with customers in Canada and the U.S. with the goal of developing a customer conference on LNP Services by mid 2001.

The Year In Review, (continued)

Wireless service providers intending to implement a SOA system and/or LSMS solution for Wireless Number Portability are encouraged to begin testing with the NPAC.

During the June-August timeframe, the NPAC experienced record porting volumes, increasing from an average of 654,508 to 853,713. In addition, the Midwest Region broke through their minimum target amount in August, the first time a region has been billed over the Target Amount.

NeuStar has implemented a new process for notifying NPAC users when there is an outage situation. Beginning Oct. 2, the NPAC will send e-mail disaster notifications to the affected region only.

Since adding the new Customer Technical Specialist (CTS) position to the NPAC Help Desk, the number of tickets that are closed or resolved on the initial call has improved to 95%.

November/December issue

NeuStar/NAPM execute extensions for the existing LNP contracts. The extensions provide for reduced TN porting event pricing, changes of the User Support Contacts to the Help Desk, implementation of the Gateway Evaluation Process, and other various terms and conditions.

As part of the LNP contract extensions, there will be significant changes to how calls to the NPAC's Help Desk are answered, processed, and billed.

NeuStar hits record porting volumes in October, having met all performance requirements in all eight regions even while handling a record volume of 1.126 million ports. During the same month, the NPAC broke the one million mark in porting volumes.

NeuStar is a sponsor of the "Wireless Number Portability Conference" in Washington, DC in February. ■

NPAC Continues Record Volumes in January

In January, the NPAC handled a record volume of 1.5 million ported numbers. Except for one outage in the West Coast Region, NeuStar met all performance requirements in all eight regions.

For each SLR in January, the 100% result means that the performance target for each performance measure was met in all eight regions. NPAC performance for 2000 is based on 12 months multiplied by eight regions per month. For example, SLR 1 performance is 95.8% because out of 96 opportunities NeuStar met 92.

NeuStar also tracks customer satisfaction with its LNP services. NeuStar has developed and implemented customer surveys in the areas listed below. All responses are scored on a five-point scale, with 5.0 being the maximum score.

No.	Survey Name	2000	Jan-01
1.	NPAC Help Desk Survey	4.3	4.5
2.	Billing Survey	3.9	3.5
3.	Industry Forums Surveys	4.2	N/A
4.	Training	4.5	4.1

For more detailed information, such as month-by-month regional performance levels and exact definition of each SLR, please see your regional NAPM representatives. Contact information is also available at www.npac.com. ■

SLR#	SLR Name	2000 Result	Jan-01
1		95.8	87.5
2		100	100
3		96.9	100
4		91.7	100
5		100	100
6		100	100
7		100	100
8		nmo	nmo
9		nmo	nmo
10		nmo	nmo
11		100	100
12		100	100
13		83.3	100
14		100	100
15		100	100
16		100	100
17		100	100
18		100	100
19		100	100
20		100	100
21		100	100
21		nmo	nmo
21		nmo	nmo
22		99	100
23		99	100
24		nmo	nmo
25		nmo	nmo
26		nmo	nmo
27		100	100

*Note: nmo = no measurable events.

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NPAC Sets Training Dates for March-May

Training dates for the NPAC have been set for March, April and May for LNP Pooling and Low Interface (LTI) users, as well as Release 3.0.

The scheduled dates are March 7-8 and 21-22; April 4-5, and 18-19; and May 2-3, 16-17, 30-31. The classes are 1-1/2 days. The training provides an overview of LNP and Pooling; covers what LNP is and how it works; what Pooling does and how it is a part of LNP, as well as an overview of Release 3.0. The Release 3.0 information includes all the necessary information for Service Providers to manage Pooling Blocks and LTI exercises to familiarize students with screens used for Pooling Block Management.

For more information on the training classes, please contact Lynne Bowman, NeuStar's Training Manager in Chicago, at 312-928-4542 or by email at lynne.bowman@neustar.com. ■

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