Ericsson H.323 Gatekeeper now commercially available

Industry's first standards-compliant Internet telephony gatekeeper ensures future network interoperability and opens the doorway for exciting new services.

Ericsson today announced availability of the industry's first industry-standard H.323 Gatekeeper System for carrier-grade systems, which adds the network intelligence needed to introduce dynamic new services that have been the promise of IP telephony. The Ericsson H.323 Gatekeeper System also dramatically improves the management of Internet telephony networks and ensures future interoperability with other vendor equipment.

The system is available immediately for world wide commercial deployment and evaluation by service providers, research labs, Internet telephony exchange carriers, NexGen Telcos, and visionary startups developing value-added services for IP telephony. Ericsson presently offers a full range of IP telephony solutions being deployed commercially in 23 countries as of May 1998.

The new system will enable Internet telephony industry players, to take full advantage of the technology by:

- stimulating the development of advanced value-added services for networks, such as customized service categories and profiles for individual subscribers
- protecting existing investments in Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) by ensuring future interoperability between different vendors' equipment
- enhancing the dependability of carrier class VoIP network management
- utilizing least-cost routing options to increase network and cost efficiencies
- improving network reliability because the Ericsson H.323 Gatekeeper is independent of the Gateway

The Ericsson Gatekeeper was independently and successfully tested by Telenor Nextel at the world's first public H.323 interoperability tests during June's Voice On Net - Europe Conference in Oslo, Norway. The system is written in Java and developed on UNIX platform for large scaleable applications. The commercial version is available on a Windows NT or SUN Solaris platform.

"The Ericsson Gatekeeper system is the first of its type to offer interoperability with the major client vendors," explained Ivar Plahte, director of telecom over IP at Telenor Nextel. "Our demonstration showed how it enables operators to dramatically improve the management of their networks. We also demonstrated the real-time Java billing machine, which we created to keep track of billing records on our network."

"The system's network intelligence is bound to stimulate the development of exciting new services from existing and start-up IP H.323 application vendors, research labs and visionary carriers," said Thomas Anglero, business manager, Ericsson AS. "Those new services will pull voice over IP out of the 'cheap phone calls' category — we have entered the era when IP telephony can truly impact the economy."

Commercial and evaluation versions of the Ericsson H.323 Gatekeeper System are available to operators, research labs and vendors. The evaluation package incorporates the full functionality included in the commercial version of the H.323 gatekeeper system but with a limitation on the maximum number of end-users. Once operators have evaluated the system, they will be able to upgrade easily to the full working system.

"The Ericsson H.323 Gatekeeper is a full-blown Gatekeeper system, unlike any product now available on the market," added Anglero. "When you buy a gatekeeper toolkit from other vendors, you're getting a slice of pizza — just some source code with limited network involvement. With the Ericsson H.323 Gatekeeper, you get the whole pie with extra toppings."

Companies interested in further information or wishing to order the Ericsson H.323 Gatekeeper System commercial version or evaluation package, may access the Ericsson Web page: www.ericsson.com/gatekeeper/.

Ericsson's full range of IP telephony solutions are available for consumers, business and SOHO customers, commercial customers, call centers, carriers and ISPs. They include:

- Phone Doubler provides simultaneous Internet and telephone usage over a single analog phone line.
- Phone Doubler at Work allows access to corporate intranets or LANs and all related services via a dial-up connection with simultaneous voice telephone access.
- Phone Doubler 800 is an E-commerce solution that allows call center capabilities over the Internet. 800-calls can be initiated from a web page with the click of a mouse.
- IPTC supports phone-to-phone, fax-to-fax and PC-to-phone services over TCP/IP networks. This includes long distance calling over an IP connection.
- Gatekeeper is a fully H.323 compliant gatekeeper product that allows voice over IP network providers to deploy/manage their real time voice, video, data, billing, security and other services.

Ericsson´s 100,000 employees are active in more than 130 countries. Their combined expertise in fixed and mobile networks, mobile phones and infocom systems makes Ericsson a world-leading supplier in telecommunications.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Thomas F. Anglero, Business Manager, Ericsson AS Datacom Networks &
IP Services
Phone: +47 66 8405 31
Email: thomas.anglero@ericsson.com

Lars Östlund, Press Relations Manager
Ericsson Business Area Infocom Systems
Phone: +46 8 681 26 56
Email: lars.ostlund@etx.ericsson.se