Google Says Its Google Voice Service Exempt From FCC Laws

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Editor's Note: We definitely need to sort out the datacom/telecom issue, if only to prevent legal gymnastics from provider companies.

(ChannelWeb [1]) - Google said that it is not subject to the same Federal Communications Commission regulations as major telecoms, after telecom giant A&T said the search engine company's VoIP service, Google Voice, violates federal communications laws.

Google's assertion comes after AT&T demanded that the Federal Communications Commission investigate Google's Google Voice service, which it says should be subject to the same federal communications laws as common telecom carriers. Specifically, AT&T said Google Voice service restricts users from placing calls to geographic locations that charge significantly higher access fees -- fees that major telecoms are required to pay.

Telecom providers, such as AT&T (NYSE:T), are not permitted to discriminately charge more based on location, according to the FCC.

Google maintained in a blog that common carriers, like AT&T, have been justified in accusing local carriers of abusing the system. Common carriers have frequently accused local carriers of charging excessive connection fees under a plethora of misrepresented pretences, as well as engaging in corrupt practices such as taking kickbacks from pornographic chatline operators and other services.

"We agree with AT&T that the current carrier compensation system is badly flawed, and that the single best answer is for the FCC to take the necessary steps to fix it," Richard Whit, Google media counsel, acknowledged in a company blog.

Under common carrier laws, local telephone carriers have the discretion to charge common carriers such as AT&T exorbitantly high rates to connect calls to their networks. Meanwhile, these common carriers are required to connect these calls, regardless of how much they're charged per location.

"By blocking these calls, Google is able to reduce its access expenses," AT&T said in a letter, the Los Angeles Times reports.

However, Whit also stipulated that Google Voice is unlike other mainstream carriers, and therefore not subject to the same FCC regulations that apply to AT&T and other major telecoms.

Click Here [2] for the rest of the article.

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