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ENUM: Electronic-Numbering, the way forward to accessing your friends and customers

Have you ever wanted to contact someone by email or fax or mobile phone but only have their fixed-line telephone number? **ENUM** is an emerging telecoms protocol that enables you to do exactly that and indeed it goes further, as it is capable of giving you ANY type of address that a telephone number-holder cares to register (e.g. web URL, Internet Telephony ...). ENUM automatically returns a set of corresponding contact addresses when someone's telephone number is entered, making it easy for service providers to then automate an actual connection over the most appropriate, efficient cost-effective medium.

ENUM potentially brings new opportunities for telecoms operators, Internet service providers, directory operators and communications software developers and ComReg's consultation paper provides sufficient background on ENUM for them to explore this further. ENUM has "been around" for some years but now that the relevant standards are more or less complete and trials are getting underway in other countries it has acquired some momentum. ComReg urges Industry players interested in this new technology to come forward with comments by May 2nd 2003. The Consultation Paper is 03/36 and it can be accessed at www.comreg.ie.

ENUM is already on trial or about to go on trial in various countries (e.g. UK, Austria, Sweden, France) and ComReg is now consulting to discover whether there is sufficient interest in the topic in Ireland to carry out a trial here. Such a trial would provide a good familiarity with the system and identify the opportunities and challenges that are presented by ENUM. This is a necessary precedent to any commercial offerings because while the protocol itself is simple, its implementation and the infrastructure needed are highly complex.

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