

## Free Conference Calling Services & Quality Issues with VoIP

If your organization is using a free conferencing service (such as freeconferencecall.com, freeconference.com, totallyfreeconferencecalls.com, etc.) and you are experiencing voice quality issues, please be aware that BetterWorld Telecom cannot provide troubleshooting support for these external, free conferencing services.

We understand that the ability to split the costs of a conference call between participants is appealing to groups, because it doesn't require a single host group to cover the per minute cost for all participants via toll-free access. However, BetterWorld Telecom, and the telecoms industry as a whole, believe these free conferencing vendors are not legitimate businesses.

### Background

Free conferencing services function by routing participant calls through rural long distance phone numbers, which a modern day nationwide calling plan allows participants to do easily.

However, those rural numbers cost your carrier an exorbitant fee, a fee designed originally to help support rural carriers with infrastructure costs. The use of a free conferencing service causes large peaks in rural telecom usage, for which the large carrier pays a high cost, and that resultant income gets shared between the rural carrier and the free conferencing vendor.

In essence, the free conferencing service is a scam that abuses regulation intended to help rural carriers pay for their infrastructure by routing conference calls to obscure parts of the country.

As such, **the free conference industry and their services are not consistent** and frequently prone to performance issues.

See article on related lawsuit below.

### AT&T's 'Free Call' Bill: \$2 Million

Paul Kapustka, 2/7/2007, GigaOm

Guess who got stuck with a big bill for all those "free" international calls touted by outfits like FuturePhone? None other than AT&T, which has filed a lawsuit in Iowa claiming that "deceitful and unlawful schemes" like FuturePhone's caused a jump from \$2,000 per month to \$2 *million* per month in the fees billed AT&T by an Iowa rural telco.

Filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa, Central Division, AT&T's lawsuit seeks to stop FuturePhone as well as the telcos who provide local infrastructure from continuing with their operations that use regulatory-fee arbitrage and VoIP to provide international calls for only the price of a long-distance call to Iowa. Though the case was just filed on Jan. 29, it has already apparently caused FuturePhone to shutter its service, and has produced nothing but "no comment" replies from the Iowa LECs we contacted who were also named in the suit.

Rest of article at <http://gigaom.com/2007/02/07/atts-free-call-bill-2-million/>