



## E-TALES

A WEEK OF IT

Email your tales of wit and woe to [etales@computerworld.co.nz](mailto:etales@computerworld.co.nz).

For links relating to E-theses stories, see [computerworld.co.nz/news](http://computerworld.co.nz/news)

### Not a blue-blood

A senior executive at an IT industry group emailed *Computerworld's* editor recently – in blue. In the email, he said the colour of the text shouldn't be taken as an indication of his political leanings, or as a sign that the body he chairs endorses one particular political party. "I just like blue", was his concluding remark. Given that the body he heads does a fair bit of government lobbying, it was probably a wise move to dispel any perception that it might be affiliated with any party.

### Copyright opportunity for towies?

Writers of submissions to Parliament in response to the Copyright (Infringing File-Sharing) Amendment Bill cover the expected range of suspects.

They range from music, film and television bodies, to industry lobbies (IT, telecommunications and content providers), to civil liberties organisations ISPs and no fewer than 175 video rental outlets.

The interest of all these is fairly clear and there was as usual a scattering of points from individual private citizens.

But one outlier caught our E-Taler's eye. What was Towaway Investments' interest?, he wondered. Perhaps in addition to termination of repeat offenders' internet accounts we had a suggestion that playing illicitly acquired music on the car stereo should be punished by repossession of the vehicle (a nice little earner for towage firms). Even the Law Society hasn't thought of that one.

Disappointingly, it turns out Towaway Investments Ltd trades as Civic Video Cambridge and Civic Video Rototuna. Make that 177 video outlets.

### Pedestrians in peril

The British AA has sounded a warning to drivers and pedestrians about "iPod oblivion".

This refers to the phenomena of iPod wearers getting so wrapped up in what they're listening to that they put themselves in danger by not being aware of cars and other road hazards.

It has even coined a new term for pedestrians whose iPod use puts them out of touch with the world around them – "podestrians".

The AA president Edmund King sums it up: "When on the move our brains have much to take in and using technological gadgets



"Pedestrians" are heading for iPod oblivion, says the British AA

means that our brains can't always concentrate on so many things at once. This is when we walk into traffic, don't hear the truck, or drive cocooned from the outside world."

### Keeping on your toes

Technology may have its dangers, but it also has its benefits – a US woman was able to call for help after a home invasion by emailing her boyfriend, using her toes.

According to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Amy Windom was tied to her bed by an armed intruder, but after he left, managed to use her toes to type an email from a laptop by the bed. She retrieved the laptop with her feet, opened it, and was able to connect to the internet and toe-type the email.

### World's dumbest hacker

Britain's version of New Zealand's *Target* consumer affairs show recent-

ly nabbed a tradesman doing things he shouldn't.

But rather than catching a repairman calling at a house to do a job and peeking at things he shouldn't, the show on Britain's Sky News uncovered a computer engineer who harvested the customer's bank account details when he was meant to be fixing a PC.

Grzegorz Zachodni was sentenced to nine months at London Magistrate's Court after being caught stealing bank details from a Sky News reporter. The journalist was actually investigating the quality of service offered by laptop repair shops, but covert software revealed that Zachodni took his fault investigations a step too far.

Webcam footage and the covert software revealed that Zachodni spent 20 minutes looking at personal files, including a large number of the reporter's photographs as well as files marked "private", which contained her bank details. He was also seen using a USB stick to copy details from the computer. He later made six attempts to access the reporter's bank details using the password and login details from the computer.

Sky News broadcast a news report of its investigation and then passed details of the inquiry to the London Metropolitan Police Service's Economic and Specialist Crime Unit. Zachodni was subsequently arrested.

# How long before mobile regulation kicks in?

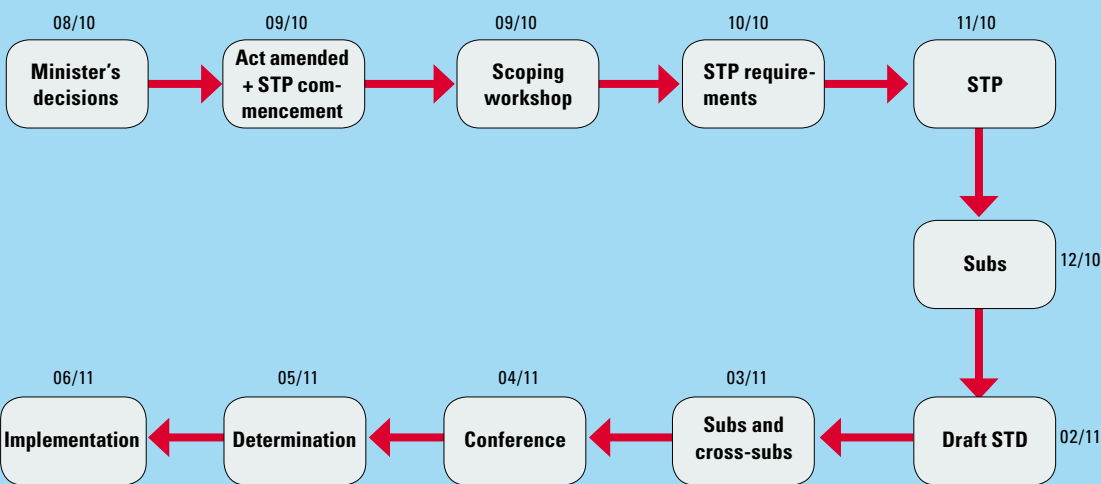
Earlier this month ICT Minister Steven Joyce accepted the Commerce Commission's recommendation to regulate mobile termination rates (MTRs).

MTRs are the fees the mobile carriers pay to terminate calls on each other's network. The Commerce Commission began the investigation that led to the Minister's decision in November 2008 – so how long before regulation is enacted?

Lawyer Michael Wigley, the Principal of Wigley & Company, a law firm specialising in ICT, says it could be as much as a year away. Here is his timeline:

## MTAS timeline

Benchmarked against past STDs, the process may take longer



STP = Standard Terms Process. Subs and cross subs = submissions and cross submissions.

### Michael Wigley's commentary

The regulation of MTRs will be carried out according to the standard terms determination (STD) process, which came in under the 2006 amendments to the Telecommunications Act. There have been quite a few STDs since, such as Local Loop Unbundling and Sub-loop Unbundling (SLU). They all took between seven to 19 months from commencement of the STD process, to final decision (the final STD). For example, SLU-related issues involved very challenging pricing issues (particularly as to cabinet/exchange fibre pricing) and that took 19 months.

Of course there are reasons why some took longer than others. Also, it is not really possible to speed things up beyond a certain point, given all the issues that have to be dealt with.

The final decision is followed by an implementation period before the service is available. This is not just a matter of fixing rates (dollars).

For mobile termination the STD process kicks off in September when the Minister's decision is implemented formally. So, if we benchmark from the shortest STD so far, that's one month leading up to September kick-off when the changes to the Act are formally adopted, then seven months for the process and then a month (which is tight) to implementation. Best case scenario, assuming that benchmark, is nine months from now (April 2011). While potentially possible, that is challenging given the controversial pricing issues around mobile terminations – plus there's the Christmas holidays brown out I haven't factored in.

Given the parties and issues involved, the Commission will have its work cut out keeping the time down to a minimum.