

MCI's IP-RELAY.com

By Jerry Nelson

Arguably the greatest boon to business and to personal life over the past several decades has been the emergence of the Internet. Once used almost exclusively by scientists to transmit messages through computer systems that filled entire rooms, the Internet now touches virtually every aspect of life and culture. In November 2000, MCI tapped into the awesome power of the Internet when it introduced Internet Protocol Relay, or IP-Relay for short.

IP-RELAY.com was the first Internet-based communication tool developed specifically for relay users. Users can make a relay call directly from their computers via the Internet. One of the greatest benefits of IP-RELAY.com is that a TTY is not needed. Relay users no longer need to move from their computers to their TTYs to make a call. Instead, they have the ease and flexibility of remaining online and continuing to work on their computer while making a relay call!

A user from Illinois wrote: “[IP-RELAY.com] shows how forward thinking the people who are involved in establishing something like this and we truly depend tremendously on the cutting edge of technology. Adding this feature truly enhances the experience of being on the Internet. A perfect example of hitting two birds with a stone! Not only that, the Internet is very easily accessible anywhere. A regular phone with a TTY to make relay call is, unfortunately, definitely not as accessible as getting on the Internet to make a relay call.”

IP-RELAY.com lets users make relay calls from home, workplace, libraries, hotel rooms and Internet cafes. Since its inception, MCI has received hundreds of comments applauding this freedom. A user from New Mexico wrote “I have

not used a TTY since I discovered IP-RELAY.com” while a user in Ohio related that “I have used MCI’s IP-Relay service on my computer since I no longer have a TTY in my house. It’s faster and better than the old dial-up way.”

Unlike calls placed through a TTY, users can make multiple calls through IP-RELAY.com at the same time. Each call is displayed in its own window so that every conversation is easily distinguished. Users experience the freedom of carrying on two, three, or even more conversations simultaneously. While users are “on the phone” they can still access and surf the Internet. IP-RELAY.com has given “multi-tasking” a whole new meaning!

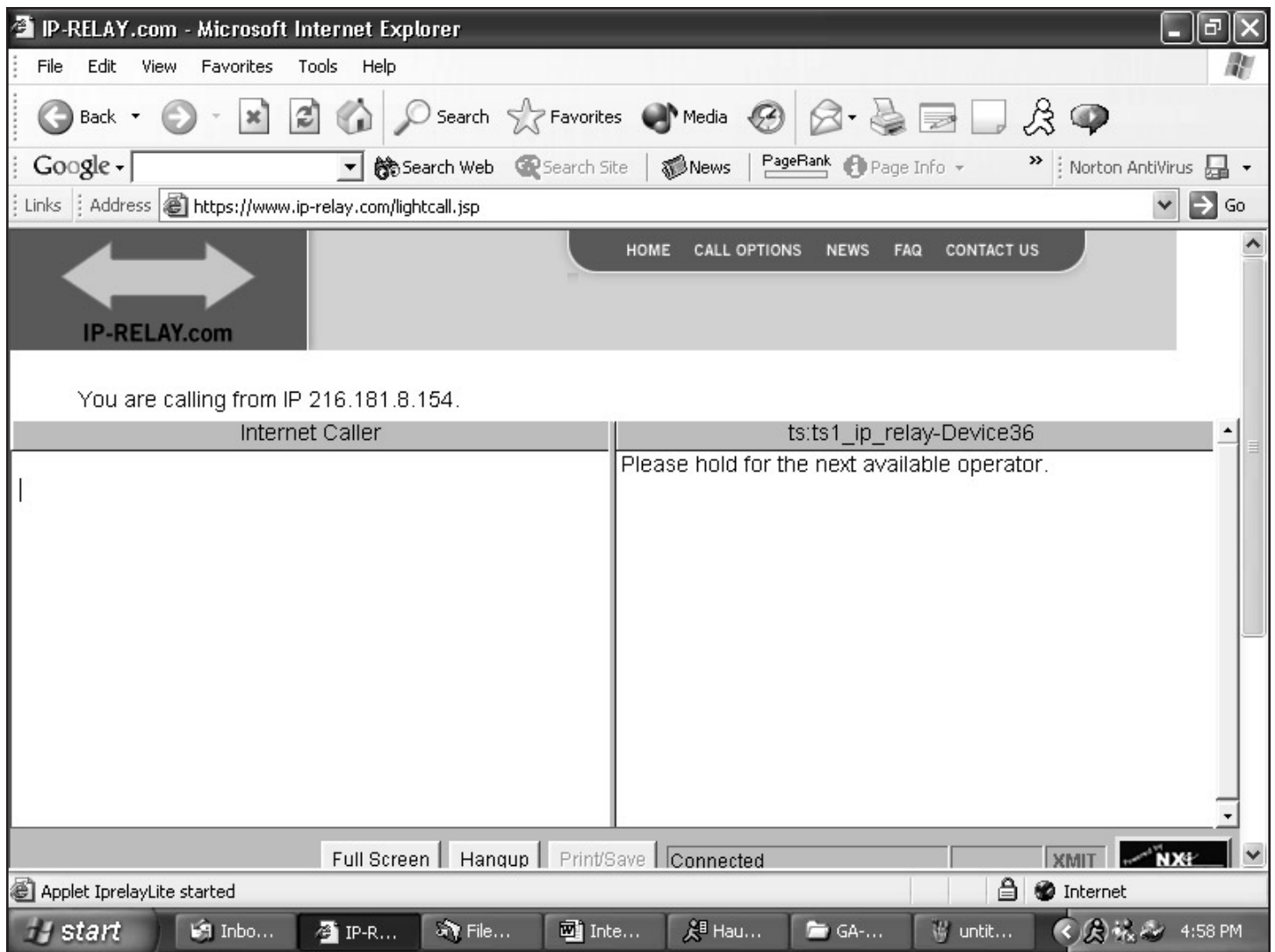
An IP-RELAY.com business user sums it up: “I have noticed a distinctive difference with this IP-Relay service. The operator seemed to be very professional and businesslike when it comes to discussions about the business. The quality of relay operators is EXTREMELY important for my business venture. The relay service I have is not quite effective for my business. I had to avoid at all times using the relay service until my business colleague told me of this IP-relay service. I’m very pleased!!!!”

One of IP-RELAY.com’s extraordinary appeals is its ease-of-use. Making a call is simple - just click on www.IP-RELAY.com. Users are quickly connected to a relay operator ready to take the call. Based on user feedback, the web-site was recently redesigned for easier navigation and to improve the speed and ease of making a relay call. Additionally, the web-site includes information on the latest advances in IP-Relay (“News”) including an on-line newsletter that provides current stories of interest to the IP-Relay community, tips on how to improve your calling experience, and profiles of individuals that are making a difference.

IP-RELAY.com operators follow the same communication procedures, conventions and confidentiality requirements as traditional relay operators. IP-RELAY.com callers will receive the same greeting as when they place a TTY call. Standard relay abbreviations such as “GA” and “SK” are also the same for IP-Relay communication. And of course,



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IP-RELAY.com calls, like all relay conversations are protected by stringent confidentiality guidelines.

Another benefit for IP-RELAY.com users is the ability to customize the look and feel of their on-line call. IP-RELAY.com Custom Calling allows users to personalize their relay experience. Users can change font types, sizes and colors. The option has proven exceptionally beneficial to users with vision disabilities - those who previously could not use a TTY - and now, are able to make relay calls by modifying the font to a typeface, size and color that is clearly visible to them.

Another important feature -- IP-RELAY Voice software - allows users to save their conversations as individual files on their computers that can be accessed and reviewed at a later time. Text can be cut, copied and pasted to and from other software applications such as email or word

processing applications. Plus conversations can be sent directly to a printer if a user wants a hard copy. And just recently, IP-RELAY Voice added a new feature that allows users to make and receive calls and text mail on their PC.

If users desire, they can create and save a personal profile that includes all of the options available through Custom Calling. The profile saves the user's preferred "look and feel" and there is no need to reset the options every time a new call is made.

Most importantly to many users, IP-RELAY.com is currently offered to its users for free. Users can call anywhere in the U.S. and there are no long distance charges associated with making the call. Additionally, there are no charges to access the site or to register a profile. This makes IP-RELAY.com not only one of the most convenient and easiest to use relay option, but also the most cost effective.

Perhaps most compelling is that this is just the beginning! New features are constantly being recommended, reviewed and developed. IP-RELAY.com Split Screen is now available, providing users with a smoother, easier way to read their conversations. New technical advances and innovations are appearing at a blistering pace and it won't be long before additional Internet services become available. And IP-RELAY Video will be premiering soon, allowing users to use their computer as a Video Relay device. IP-RELAY.com offers an extensive suite of text, video, and voice communication options.

While there is no crystal ball that can predict where the future will take IP-Relay, IP-RELAY.com will remain at the forefront of innovative relay communications.

IP-RELAY.com: A New Way to Relay