

People Express To Be Hacked To Pieces

by Paul G. Estev

If a business is starting a new, expensive touch-tone interactive phone service, it should assess its real usefulness. New systems should be tested by the real users as well as the system creators. All too often, businesses do not notice that their systems have fatal flaws or are user unfriendly.

People Express, the growing economy airline (economy carrier) has started such a new service that has many of the worst features of any Tone Activated Service (TAS). Other services like this are George Bank By Phone, IBM-Audio Distribution System, and Mobil Credit Check.

The new service is called "Pick Up & Go" and has been described in detail in recent advertising. It is a system where anyone could reserve airplane tickets for any People's flight using a telephone. Originally developed by AT&T, Pick Up & Go should be going soon.

This service is in many ways like other TAS's, but unlike a voice-mail system, there is no real reward for exploring this system. With voice-mail systems, people acquire accounts which they can use. In Pick Up & Go, there are no free plane tickets to get, because you can only book the flights. The tickets must be picked up at your flight...and paid for then. Yet, it is an example of poor design using this now common technology, which integrates phone systems with data lines—in this case, the reservation computers.

People Express is known for their low prices, which gives them the competitive edge to be known as the fastest growing airline as well as good investment. This also has its drawbacks. Low prices means low incentive for travel agents to book flights on the airline. In addition, People's is well known for overbooking flights while expecting many of the potential passengers to not show up. People's instituted this service so they could get around the travel agent problem. But it is expected that they will have more of the same problems with the booking of flights, if not more of different problems...

This is how the system works: As with most TAS's, there is a voice that asks for touch tone input as to what date, time, flight, etc. you wish to take. At first, a female voice asks you for a seven digit identification number which you can make up (they suggest that you enter your phone number, so it is easy for you to remember). You tell the people at People Express this number when you pick up the tickets, so they know that it is really you who made the reservation. In effect you are just giving them a password. So you enter your seven digit code then a '#'. (Remember, you enter a '#' after each command, and numbers can be either one or two digits. You will be

prompted by the voice for each entry.). Then you enter the month you wish to travel then a '#'; then the date you wish to travel; then the coding for the airport you wish to leave from; your destination; then the number of tickets you want; then your desired departure hour. (Follow the hour by an 'a' or a 'p' for am or pm. After this prompt the voice will tell you the two closest flights to the hour you indicate. It will also check to see if any seats are available at this point.) Finally, you enter the flight you desire. You are then told the price of the flights you have booked. At this point you are looped back to the beginning, where you can hit a '#' at each prompt and it will 'ditto' your previous entry. You can book up to 5 seats per code, but you are able to enter a new code when you loop back, in order to book ten, a hundred, or even thousands of flights, if you are patient and devious.

Note again that you do not pay for your tickets until you get to the plane, nor do you even tell them who you are, in fact you cannot if you wished to. In addition there is no provision to cancel reservations, you cannot do this if you wished to either.

This system will allow anyone to reserve almost any number of tickets on any flight leaving in the next two months or so. You can book a flight anywhere, even to London (code-549). This is the way things should be for travelers, fast and easy, but People Express is just waiting for people, travel agents, and other airlines to take advantage. United Airlines could book whole planes and clog up People Express just by making a phone call.

It is predicted that this system will be gone quite quickly, or the software will be changed but this takes time as we all know. If they do not do away with this system, there should be a commotion about hundreds of people waiting in line for empty flights. If you wish to try out this system, call 201.769.0205. Some airport codes you may need to know are: 397-Newark, 529-Los Angeles, 626-Orlando, 743-St. Pete. The codes correspond to the three-character initials that every airport in the world has.

There are a few more things you can do after you are done booking your flight, like *H*-Help, *B*-discard last entry, *D*-Delete last reservation request, *R*-Review current reservation, *L*-Review all your confirmed reservations. At this last prompt you can use the following commands: *D*-Delete, *K*-Keep, *X*-Exit this function.

The system itself is fairly user friendly, but the female voice should tell you about the help function, you should not have to read about the help function in a newspaper advertisement. The voice should also note that you must enter a '#' after each entry, but it only does this after you make an error. You should also be provided with the list of airport codes (Actually, some are

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How to run a successful teleconference

by The Shadow

Alliance Teleconferencing Service is a bridging service offering teleconferencing to businesses. A conference merely is several phone lines tied together allowing people to talk to many locations at once. Alliance is owned by AT&T Communications. They use #4 ESS's (Electronic Switching Systems) to control their conferences. According to Alliance, conferences can be originated and controlled from most locations in the United States. The service started out in area code 202, but has been spreading throughout the country. One thing to remember is that even in the same area code some central offices will allow access, and others may not. Conferees can be from anywhere dialable by AT&T, including international. Alliance can be reached at 800-544-6363 for social-engineering or for setting up conferences in locations that cannot access Alliance directly. Using this the conference can be billed to a Calling Card or to a third number.

Alliance says the cost of a teleconference is 25 cents a line per minute, as well as the cost of a direct dialed call for each of the locations from the conference site. A monitoring Alliance operator costs an additional \$3 an hour. Thus, rumors of \$6,000 conference bills seem a little exaggerated. However, conferences can last for several days and can have several international participants, thus running the bill up.

CONFERENCE NUMBERS

Dialing 0-700-456-X00X will result in "This is Alliance Teleconferencing in [location]. You may dial during the announcement for faster setup." The main conference numbers are -100X and -200X. The locations indicated by the X (as given by Alliance and the logon recordings) are 1 being Los Angeles, 2 being Chicago, 3 being White Plains New York, and 4 being Dallas. 0 gets you the conference site closest to you. The -100X lines only accept up to 21 conferees, and usually don't allow international dialing. The other conference numbers allow up to 59 lines when available as the lines have to be apportioned between the various conferences going at the site, and also allow international dialing. According to Alliance themselves -200X are graphic conferences, -100X allows up to 59 conferees, and both always allow international dialing. However, actual exploration doesn't bear these out.

Alliance doesn't seem to admit that -300X conference (X is from 0 to 2, all located in Chicago, Illinois) numbers even exist. These conferences announce that they are graphic, and they seem to bear this out. They can also be handled as an audio conference. The only difference is that it asks when adding conferees whether the location is graphics (hit 4) or audio (hit 5). It's generally best to choose audio. These tend most often to allow the passing of control, dialing of international calls, and are also less used than the other lines.

Dialing 0-700-456-150X or -250X results in a modem connect sounding tone, followed by "You have reached Bell System Teleconferencing Service's Special Set for testing and measurement. Please enter your service code [3 digits] or wait for instructions." These cannot be reached from most area codes, resulting instead in a "The number you have dialed cannot be reached from your calling area" just as if it were an 800

number not reachable from your calling area. The only one I know that does get through is 201 (Northern New Jersey). The X goes from 0 to 4, just like the normal -100X and -200X conferences. There is no -350X series. I haven't as of yet figured out the "service code." This can be used as a normal conference, except that it requires you to confirm your choice by voice, and each section is separated by those modem connect sounding tones. Rumors are that this is the upcoming new conference system, which is supposed to add features such as the deletion of conferees. However, any keypress I have tried other than 1, 6, or 9 (the normal controls) results in a dire warning telling me "Please wait for an Alliance operator to come to your assistance." I haven't yet stuck around long enough to find out what "assistance" means. Alliance won't admit these exist, and therefore the -150X and -250X warrant much further and deeper investigation.

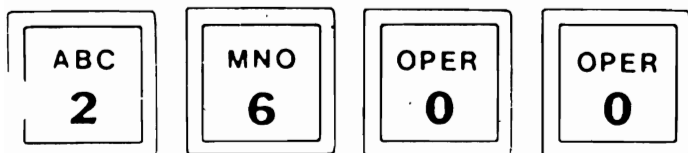
Alliance can be reached by other means. Blue boxing to 213-080-0123 and other direct routing to the Alliance machines (which used to be the only way to get through) no longer seems to work. However, box routing to 0-700-456-X00X does work. PBX's in conference country are often used to call conferences. Merely dial a PBX's inward access line, enter the access code, dial an outside line, and then either touch tone 0-700-456-X00X yourself, or dial 0 and get the operator to do it for you. Sometimes they insist that the 0-700 SAC doesn't exist, but just remain firm and tell them to try it. Social engineering also works, just call an operator and try to convince her to KP+0-700-456-1000+ST and position release, after getting her to believe you are maintenance/whatever. Getting a direct drop on an inward operator increases the chance of succeeding, such as by dialing 0-959-1211 from a pay phone (BIOC Agent 003's Basic Telcom VI, discovered by Karl Marx). Another trick suggested by Shooting Shark is to use a white boxable phone (see 2600 page 1-40, July 1984) or even an ATM help line or a hotel phone in an airport (as in the April 1985 2600, Page 2-19). Since when arranging a conference you really don't need to speak, just set up a conference normally, and when done call another payphone nearby, pass control, and continue. The conference will still be charged to the first pay phone.

Several techniques are available to improve the quality of the call. Since the call may be going through up to several extenders to reach a non-800 PBX, and from there to Alliance, the signal quality can get quite poor. A technique that helps to keep Alliance from knowing your number is to call Alliance via a PBX, add in the lower end of a loop, pass control to it, and then call the high end. A variation on this technique is to call your other line or a payphone next to you, or even, if you have call waiting, to call yourself again, pass control to yourself (it works), and then hang up the original call. All these techniques may not always work, as sometimes Alliance refuses to pass control, as mentioned above.

CONFERENCE CONTROLS

Alliance is extremely user friendly, as it was designed for businessmen. Help messages abound, and all you need to do is to follow their directions, but here is a brief going

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414 Bust

3600 News Service

Six people in area code 414, Wisconsin, were arrested for credit card fraud. The World of Cryton BBS was taken down as a result, but was reportedly not the target of the investigation, which is being continued by the Secret Service in several cities. The Wizard, Phoenix, and many other phone phreaks were among those who were implicated in the investigation.

Police Hacker Cleared

Computerworld

A preliminary investigation by the San Francisco Police Commission has cleared the police department of wrongdoing in the recent controversy over a breach in computer security.

No evidence had been uncovered to substantiate charges that a police lieutenant used a specially designed menu to gain access to Public Defender Jeff Brown's confidential files, which are stored in a shared computer system in the city's Hall of Justice building.

Although the lieutenant admitted that he was given an access level usually granted only to system administrators to conduct an internal police probe, he has denied allegations that he read confidential files stored by other agencies.

As a result of the police department's actions, a public defender had asked a San Francisco court to dismiss murder charges filed against one man, saying that the security breach had violated his right to attorney-client confidence. The judge ruled against the defense's motion.

Dial-a-Directory

USA Today

Soon to be published is a directory that lists more than 2,500 "informative, exciting, and entertaining recorded phone numbers." Called *The Incredible Dial-a-Message Directory*, it lists many of the familiar and unfamiliar recorded messages around the country. "I went through 2,500 phone books," says Mark C. Guncheon, the book's author and no stranger to three digit phone bills. The book includes such numbers as Dial-an Avalanche 9073376742, The Sleep Line 2062582791, or Dial-a-Romeo 2159766367.

Reagan Hangs Up on Kids

Newark Star Ledger

The two Montgomery, N.J. teenagers who were promised a presidential phone call as their prize for winning a national essay contest have been put on hold indefinitely, a White House spokesman said. Donna Woodwell and Kate Baicker, both 13, have been waiting four months for President Reagan's phone call, which they were promised as their reward for submitting the winning essay and illustration in a contest sponsored by Current Events magazine. Connie Mackey, the White House's director of student correspondence said she never was contacted by the publishing company and doubts whether they had arranged for the presidential call.

The editor of the publication said the kids may get a trip to Washington, D.C. Their winning essay and illustration was one of more than 400 entries in the contest, which was open to students in fourth through 12th grade. The entry, which urged the Reagan Administration to strive for nuclear disarmament was written by Baicker and illustrated by Woodwell.

MCI goes to U.K.

The Wall Street Journal

MCI Communications Corp. said it inaugurated long-distance telephone service to the United Kingdom, increasing to 18 the number of overseas locations MCI serves. The U.K. countries represent 15% of the international long-distance telephone market that totals \$6 billion in annual revenue, a spokesman for the telecommunications company said. MCI expects to reach 80% of the international market by the end of this year.

Yellow Scam

The Woodbridge News Tribune

Owners of small businesses in New Jersey are being targeted by telephone solicitors who are duping them into buying advertisements that never appear in the Yellow Pages. The "Yellow Pages" scam is a well operated, out-of-state operation that floods areas with invoices for Yellow Page advertising. Unfortunately, the advertising is not for the directory published and distributed by New Jersey Bell. Businessmen are reportedly getting invoices from a company that uses the "fingers do the walking" logo instead of the pretty Bell logo according to Monmouth County Consumer Affairs Director Sally Mollica.

"Crackers" Cracked

Online Today

Transcall America, an Atlanta based discount long-distance telephone service, has uncovered a group of computer crackers who ran up at least \$12,000 in illegal calls in five months. According to company officials, no one has been charged, but the FBI is investigating the case and could bring state and federal charges. The crackers were caught when investigators allowed a stolen access code to be posted on a Cocoa Beach, Florida, bulletin board, to remain valid, and to be traced. The bogus calls were traced to several homes in Brevard County, Florida.

Carrier Choosing Time

Associated Press

Bell Atlantic telephone companies in six states and the District of Columbia will begin using ballots at the end of May to make it simpler for customers to sign up for easy access long-distance dialing. Equal access, as the system is called, was agreed to as part of the AT&T breakup. It gives all long-distance companies equal access to customers by allowing callers to reach their long-distance company by dialing "1," instead of a multi-digit access code. Customers of Bell Atlantic now must place their orders through the long-distance company instead of balloting. AT&T competitors claim balloting gives companies a better chance to get part of the long-distance market.

Mystery Transistor

Business Week

Enthusiastically describing ongoing projects, Robert W. Lucky, executive director of research for communications sciences, mentioned that Bell Labs researchers were working on a "ballistic transistor" that switches at the incredible speed of 10 femoseconds (1 quadrillionth of a second). No sooner were the words out then he caught himself. "I guess I shouldn't have mentioned that," he said half-jokingly to two public relations people in the back of the small conference room.

Letters

Which of the many computer networks are the best to use?

We looked for a few replies to this and here are a couple of them:

"I access a database that is on UNINET, TYMNET, TELENET, and DUSNET. I've only used TYMNET and TELENET, and TYMNET is far superior. TELENET is one of the most exasperating experiences I've ever had."

"Why, TYMNET, of course!"

"Seriously, Tymnet has more nodes than any of the others; it is also more secure. I have used TELENET as a private user, and it is MUCH slower than Tymnet, but since you're not going to out-and-out believe someone who works for one of them, I suggest you look at a study done by DATAPRO Research Corporation (they're in Delran, NJ) which compares TELENET, TYMNET and several other companies."

We'd like to hear more on this.

What are silver box tones?

Every touch tone phone can produce sixteen tones, not just twelve. There is the capability for an additional row of buttons on the right side. These tones are labeled (moving from top to bottom) A, B, C, and D. They are also referred to as Flash, Flash Override, Priority, and Priority Override (in increasing order of importance). This is how the calls are treated when they are made. Thus a "D" call gets priority over a "B" call. This system is used primarily on Autovon, or Pa Bell, the military phone network, which can shut down the regular network at any time. The tones are also used for test purposes and occasionally do interesting things for phone phreaks.

What is 950?

950 is an exchange created to fulfill part of the purpose of equal access. It was designed to work in all area codes, so that the same access number could be used by a long distance company nationwide. In other words, 950-1022 will get you MCI wherever you are. There is no charge to call 950 numbers and the connection is always crystal clear. You can only dial this exchange locally, i.e. you cannot access San Francisco's 950 exchange from Los Angeles.

Is it easier to trace 800 calls or 950 calls?

Tracing an 800 call simply is not as easy as tracing a 950 call. 800 numbers exist all over the country whereas 950's aren't an actual exchange, but are located within every central office. Thus, ANI (Automatic Number Identification) intra-exchange is very easy. The further away from the central office, the harder this becomes.

What is REMOB?

REMOB is remote observation. Call a number, enter a code, enter a number, and listen. We need more info on this one ourselves.

Especially as to if these numbers really exist. We do admit that the technology is there. In fact, we were told of the number where you could overhear random MCI conversations in Texas, a few months ago, without entering any codes, but it stopped working by the time we went to print.

What follows are two true accounts of adventures that were sent to us. The first was sent by The Crazy Man. It depicts thievery and destruction. 2600 in no way condones this type of activity. We really do not. But there are some things to learn from the first adventure about the construction of pay-phones, so we decided to include it. As they say: Learn good things-the bad will teach you by themselves. The second adventure is presented for your amusement only.

I am writing you because I have done something that might be of importance to the readers of this mag. Well, a few days ago me and a friend went to a construction site and found a telephone on a piece of wood with a wood base, so we decided to take the bitch home. Well, never underestimate the power of a fortress fone. We read a file that BIOC wrote called Basic Telecommunications, Part VI. It said that you could drill out the main lock located on the right side of the coin box. So we tried to attempt this daring feat. Never, I repeat, never waste your time drilling out the lock. It will take days and days and probably about 30 drill bits. After about five hours of drilling, me and my friend decided to try a different approach. We knocked off the metal washer located right on top of the coin return (it should just break right off). Then we used a pair of vise grips to tear the metal off around the coin return. By doing this we came upon the coin box, but it still had the lock on top of it! Now, this is the part that takes the longest time. You have to rip out (with the grips) the metal, which is only 1/8 inch, that surrounds the entire coin box. Then you must push all of the locks around the silver plate in, or the silver plate will never come off. After pushing in the locks, you might be able to remove the silver plate. If not, then take a good size sledge hammer and a trusty crow-bar and whack the plate as hard as you can, making the lid come off. Now, you might think: Now that I got the plate off I can just pull the coin box right out. Wrong. To pull the box out you must have a key to unlock the coin box. If you don't have a key (which I didn't) then put the trusty crow-bar around the coin box and bend the box till it's removable. Now be sure to get the little slips of paper that say "Sorry, this phone is temporarily out of order." They are compliments of Bell. Now you

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Letters

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should be about 50 or 60 bucks richer by now, so go spend it on parts to make a blue box, or something related to phreaking. Good luck.

Monday, 04/01/85 6:08 am

The phone rang. I got up, looked at the desk, it's 6:08 am, an hour before I go to school. I pick the receiver up. "Is this John McKee?" asked the caller urgently. "Yes," I replied half asleep. "You better get rid of your printouts and your stuff on disks, you're gonna get a visit within the next 20 minutes," the kid said. He hung up. I got nervous. The phone rang again, "John, this is Jim, Greg just got busted and his brother has been calling up all of his friends on a sheet Greg had. Did he call you?" "Yes he did," I said. "You better believe it, because you're gonna get nailed with the rest of us. Get rid of everything, burn it." I thought to myself, "What did I do to make them want me? Codes? No time, have to burn everything pertaining to illegal wrongdoings." I was panic-stricken. I got it together and went outside and burned it, disks, printouts, everything. As I was returning to my house, I wondered if they had a tap on my line. The phone rang another time. "Oh no. Who is it now?" I went in and answered it, only to be told "April Fools!" Click.

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IN GERMAN	5
DIAL-A-PLANET	0114112468055
SLRPRISE	0114112468015
CBS-REMOTE FEED	2125804481
US-DIAL TONE IN UK (POSSIBLY	
NON-SUPED)	01144612468011

over of the commands. After the logon recording, choose the number of locations for your conference. Choose below 15 locations, as many people use Alliance, and using more locations than available results in "no conference facilities available now". To change your choice dial a #, or to go onward hit a *. To add a number while in control mode dial 1+ the phone number. To dial international dial 1 + 011 + the phone number. Passing control can be done by dialing 6 plus the number of the person on the conference you wish to pass control. Then by hitting a # you rejoin the conference, or by just hanging up you leave. When in the conference dialing a # will return you to control mode.

When conferees hang up, a "dee-doot" will be heard. The controller also hears the phone number of person who left. Hitting the # immediately calls the departed back. There is no way to drop people from conference other than getting a conference operator to do it or by blowing 2600 hertz down the line. However, this will drop each and every person on a trunk using in-band signaling. Hitting a 0 in control mode summons a conference operator, however, she/he takes control before he/she answers, so only do this when you know what you are doing. Hitting a 9 in control mode requests a "silent attendant listener line." According to the Demon this option allows the controller to hear the tones and phone numbers of people hanging up while he is in control mode. Conference op's claim this function is for secretaries and such to listen to, but not participate in, conferences for note taking purposes.

If these instructions sound confusing, don't worry. Remember, the entire conference is accompanied by extremely user friendly messages. Recently, on weekends or late night, many telcom hobbyists have had problems with transferring control, instead getting a recording "Not available at this time". Also, similarly, international dialing is sometimes unavailable. Generally -300X does this less often, then -200X next.

DANGERS

One must always be prepared for listeners whenever one conferences. If one is discussing "questionable" matters on a conference, last names and phone numbers should NEVER be given out. One of your fellow telcom hobbyists might be an FBI agent, or sometimes a conference operator listens in on conferences which sound "suspicious." They do not do this usually, as Alliance most often carries business calls (you have to remember this folks!), and thus doesn't expect fraudulent calls. Sure ways to interest an op is to have either all the conferees but one or only just the controller hang up. When a controller hangs up the conference op takes control and attempts to let the former controller "regain his conference" by calling him at home. Also, controllers who spend long amounts of time in control mode, resulting in everyone else hanging up, arouses the attention of the op. The number which originally started the conference can hang up though, after passing control, but the conference will still be billed to it.

Dangers of fraudulently started conferences seem to be slight. The only person I knew who got caught was forced to pay for a phone call from Dallas (where the conference was started) to his home in California. This is not to say it is safe, but it definitely is safer than using 950's fraudulently. Even phreaks who set up several conferences a night for months, including the harassment of DA operators, haven't been caught. However, we don't suggest you attempt a fraudulent conference. Even permitting yourself to be added to a fraudulent conference is enough for prosecution, according to AT&T. One thing that prevents a lot of this investigation is that most fraudulent conferences are set up with PBX's, and thus the prosecution lies with the owners of the PBX, and AT&T isn't even involved. For this reason, PBX's often are traced.

Another risk is that all numbers dialed are recorded by Alliance, even misdials. The numbers dialed are all printed out and sent to a vault at the Chicago Bell Test Labs for storage for their records. In addition, conferences are randomly taped and monitored for fraud. It would seem safer to use Alliance to call an extender, and then dial out from there, as although Alliance records all numbers dialed, logically they probably only pay attention to numbers they intend to act on, i.e. add to the conference. The subsequent use of an extender is a matter of investigation by another company, and don't forget AT&T and the extender companies are competitors, and thus they wouldn't always go out of their ways to cooperate.

STUNTS

Often when a conference starts to slow down, people start suggesting various stunts to liven things up. One word of warning, most of these techniques would be construed as harassment, and thus are illegal. One of the most common used is adding a multitude of Directory Assistance operators. Listening to them ask each other "What city please?" and then arguing about who belongs on the line is extremely humorous. Confusion reigns when you attempt to get them to look up a number. Some DA's have had this done so many times that they realize that this is a conference and will either hang up immediately or will threaten you with taking over your conference. Remember, only the conference operator can take over a conference, so most of these threats are ineffectual. When any of them give a hard time, just ask to speak to their supervisor, as this usually adds even more confusion. Similar things can be done with business offices, repair service ("sir, I'm getting all this cross talk on my line" "no, it's my line." ad infinitum) telcom ops, and other phone company personnel. Also,

computer companies or other corporate bureaucracies have similar chaos potential. One interesting thing to try is to pose as a phone company employee for social engineering purposes. However, most phreaks fail to realize that "TSPS maintenance" or "Bell Security" gets a little too repetitious and suspicion arousing due to their over-heavy use.

Generally, for courtesy's sake, one should call people who generally expect to get weird calls at odd hours, and are often bored at their jobs. Radio station DJ's often enjoy this, as do hotel operators and bell boys. Going international often increases the fascination with conferences. Several hotel ops around the world expect and look forward to conferences calling them during the dull early morning hours, and the conferences sometimes place calls for them in appreciation. Military bases are another good site, as are unattended payphones. Sometimes people at random are called up. It often is impossible to convince people that they ARE getting a conference call, as they twist up some impossible theory to explain 15 chaotic people speaking at once. Even President Reagan (2600 1-23 April 1984) and other "celebrities" have been attempted to be reached by conferences. Often telling their secretaries that this is a conference call can arouse their curiosity enough to come on line. A common statement is "You damn computer hackers are so smart to have figured this out." Little do they know how simple it is, and it also shows how people and the mass media constantly misidentify anything mildly out of the ordinary as the fault of computer's influence on people. (Sorry about the side digression)

Remember that when adding recordings or extenders to a conference that they generally will not hang up. Similarly, people added can't be forcibly disconnected without the conference operator's help, and can stay on as long as they want, monitoring or taking notes. Only way to rid a conference of these is to blast 2600 down the line, with the results predicted above. When adding "dangerous" people such as FBI agents or informants the use of three way calling by one of the conferees is generally more intelligent, as it permits the caller to forcibly drop them.

Many of these stunts mentioned are plain childish, rude, and unthoughtful to others. Many of these definitely would count as harassment. Frequent resortation to these often arouses the suspicious curiosity of Alliance ops. Continual use of these may end up in a general tightening up of security in Alliance, not due to fraudulent calls, but from complaints. Obviously, these utterly senseless acts should be conducted in extreme moderation.

OTHER CONFERENCES

The old method of conferencing by calling the operator and asking for a conference still works. This however is controlled physically by the operator, as it uses a cordboard. Three way calling of course is another conferencing option. Multi-line loops are rare, but do exist. Sometimes businesses connect several phone lines together to form a conference. One of the most famous was the UCLA one at 213-206-2810 to -2817 as last known. One up as of the writing of this article is at 602-976-0770 to -0777. Another conferencing system is City Conference in Oakland and San Francisco. Similar to this is a system called Phone-a-Friend in some areas at 550-5000.

Every once in a while conferences are set up in the old historical phreaking mold on PBX switchboards or on telephone switching equipment by renegade linemen and the like. One of the most historic of these was the "2111" conference which was arranged through an unused telex test-board trunk in a 4A switching machine in Vancouver, Canada. For several months phone phreaks could HF via a blue box 604 (Vancouver's area code) then 2111 (code for telex testing board) to reach phreaks and other telcom hobbyists around the world. Sometimes conferences set up by this method are accessible via normal phone lines. These conferences, by their very nature of actual adjustment of switching equipment, are rare.

Several companies offer alternate bridging services, otherwise known as conferences. These all claim they have higher quality than Alliance. They control the conference themselves "so you can just get down to business without worrying about details." You can ask them to leave, but then there is no one in control of the conference. Generally they offer smaller conferences than Alliance's 59 (Market Navigation's limit is 19) They all charge considerably more than AT&T (Market Navigation Inc. quoted a rate as \$195 per hour for a 12 person conference plus the cost of the dialed phone calls) You generally have to set up conferences ahead of time. They all will send a bill to your company, and some will allow the use of a credit card instead. Generally you have to book ahead of time. Examples of these independent firms are Darome Connection (203-797-1300), Market Navigation Inc. (914-365-0123) and Telesession. The numbers are for setting up conferences, although you can social-engineer them as well.

CONCLUSION

Basically, conferencing, even fraudulently, is one of the safest ways to get in contact with other telcom hobbyists, by its track record of busts. They are very few and far between. Several times Alliance operators have dropped in on conferences and carried on conversations with the participants. Much of the information in this article was picked up from these sources. Often one hears the common comment of many telcom corporations that "they are using us as a tax writeoff," however, how long can they keep taking losses in this post-divestiture age of of telco competition. Expect in the near future to see other telcom companies such as ITT,

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easy to find yourself: DEN-336-Denver, SYR-797-Syracuse.)). If People's really wishes to encourage the system's usage, it should also have a toll free number. In the end, this service will result in confusion and reduced service, as well as longer lines at the terminals. Those who have taken People Express flights have both regretted and come to depend on over-booking. And there will be overbooking: by people who want to play with the system, by people who make mistakes, by people who do not mind booking a flight just 'in case' they plan to travel, by travel agents who customarily book hundreds of tickets, and by competing airlines who wish to do People Express wrong. This service will do nothing but increase the problem. It is indicative of the lack of human factor in creating these systems. It is surely a pity that big companies do not have real people test their new technology for them. Marketing consultants and programmers just seem to forget that it is people who use the products in the end. It will be people who make mistakes using their new system, and it will be people who will take advantage of this new system.

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MCI, and GTE Sprint get into the act, as conferences are really pretty cheap to set up and aren't that technically exotic. Telcom hobbyists can get together to pick each others brains for info, and starters can learn the ropes in the presence of several more experienced phreaks. Also, just normal socializing with people all over the country is fun, especially when you realize you probably would have never met them otherwise. In order to join in a conference try calling someone on it who has call waiting or two phone lines, as he can relay to the controller that you want to be added. Conferencing is all in all an excellent way to communicate with the telcom community at large, when used in moderation. Use, don't abuse.

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