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e-Mail and Domain Hosting Strategies

At RAM Communications, we have the opportunity to Install scores of Internet products for our clients each year. In most cases, clients are not sure how to handle their email and domain hosting services –especially as they make the transition to a new Internet Service Provider or, ISP.

For those of you who are not familiar with these terms, “email and domain hosting”, allow us to bring you up to speed.

In the Internet world, an ISP ensures that your business connection to the Internet is secure and performing at the speed you desire. An ISP may also be responsible for servicing or, as it is known in ISP speak, ‘hosting’ email services and website addresses. Website addresses like ‘ramcomminc.com’ are referred to as, ‘domain’ names. Domains are simply the public addresses a business uses to identify and locate itself on the World Wide Web, just like a telephone number or a zip code identifies and locates your business.

If your business uses its domain name for email services, then department and user names can be assigned accordingly. So, in our case, we use addresses like, rob@ramcomminc.com and sales@ramcomminc.com which we use to communicate with our clients & vendors.

All of this so far, is probably very simple to understand. The confusion starts when an IT department or a management team decides who or what will manage these functions. The possibilities are numerous.

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Acronym Corner

Acronyms and their meanings.

ANI

Automatic Number Identification- A system, originally designed for use by Interexchange carriers (IEC's) which transmits the "billed party number" along with a call. Note that the billed party number is not necessarily the number of the line placing the call. ANI predates SS7 and can operate in with analog as well as digital trunks.

Channel

An actual path you can talk or send data over. This is what you are paying the phone company for. For instance, ISDN BRI lines can be ordered with 1 or 2 active channels and these channels can be configured for voice calls (CSV), data calls (CSD) or both (alternate CSD CSV). A channel does not necessarily have it's own unique telephone number.

D Channel

Data Channel or Delta Channel (depending on who you ask). The channel which handles ISDN network related data between the user's equipment and the Telco switch. Used to carry data to set up calls and receive calls. Some Telco's also allow users to use the D channel to access the packet data network, with appropriate terminal equipment.

T1

A common type of digital telephone carrier widely deployed within the US, Canada, and Japan. Has 24 64Kbps channels (called DSÆ 's). The most common framing scheme for T1 "robs" bits for signaling leaving 56kbps per channel available.

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A Little Humor



Hi, I'm Beattie and this is my band, as requested

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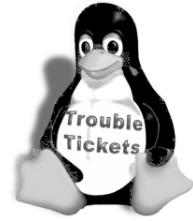
ISP companies offer service packages that are designed to manage email and domain hosting duties for clients at a low monthly fee. For smaller businesses, especially those who don't have dedicated IT help, this can be an ideal solution. For larger businesses, especially those who manage e-commerce websites and remote user activities, control and security can become issues. Their needs may be too complex or specific for an ISP's basic hosting services.

In either case, all businesses should consider the pro's and con's of ISP domain hosting before making a decision. In our experience, domain hosting can be a bit challenging. The problem lies in determining which organization is really controlling the domain name.

In many cases, an ISP such as Sprint or XO is reselling its domain hosting service through another provider.

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RAM Trouble Ticket Procedures



From time to time, RAM reminds all of our clients about our procedures for submitting trouble tickets. Your cooperation is appreciated in order for us to solve issues as quickly as possible. So, please take a moment to review the following steps in submitting trouble tickets. We encourage you to make copies and distribute this list to management.

1

IDENTIFY THE ISSUE

Most problems follow a certain pattern. Has this occurred before? What are the symptoms?

Common Phone Service Issues

- dead air on a phone line – no dial tone
- “fast busy” signals on a phone line
- noise, humming or continual static
- cannot complete local or long distance calls

Common Internet Issues

- cannot access websites
- web access seems unusually slow

3

OPEN TROUBLE TICKET

Call RAM or your appropriate service provider. It is very important to record the trouble ticket number your service provider gives you. This is your reference for tracking the issue to resolution. For internet-related issues, please try to have your account number ready for the customer service person.

Remember, most service issues are resolved within a few hours. In some cases, however, an issue may take longer. Regardless, we encourage you to call RAM. We always escalate client service issues immediately. With your documentation, we can ensure reliable service and quick resolutions.

2

DOCUMENT THE ISSUE

Before calling RAM or your service provider, it is very important to supply as much detail as possible!! These examples help technicians solve service issues quickly.

For Phone Service Issues

- document the time & number you were trying to dial
- if clients cannot reach you, document their number & time the call was placed
- if you hear an error recording, please note the message details

Discuss these with your IT department first. Many times your IT person can resolve these issues without calling your internet service provider.

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DID Number

A phone number used to route calls from the telephone network to a specific phone in a PBX (the DID extension). DID requires special DID trunks or ISDN PRI “two-way DID” trunks. Blocks of DID numbers (typically 10 or 20) are purchased from the LEC or CLEC for use on the PBX. The number of DID numbers usually substantially exceeds the number of trunks in the system.

For more definitions and terms, visit our website at: www.ramcomminc.com and click on Acronym Corner.

Additionally, when a domain is transferred to another ISP, all records throughout the World Wide Web must be updated with the domain's new IP address. (An IP address can be thought of as an internet version of a zip code—Ex: 60173 and 14.32.578.544). This process can take several days to be completed providing both the old and new ISP's communicate the information clearly and efficiently, otherwise, the process can take even longer. As a result, the website and other web-based business functions are interrupted.

Because of the frequency with which technology, pricing and services change, RAM's clients find their interests are best served when domain hosting is serviced by a third party, hosting company. This arrangement takes most of the transition pain out of the equation when a business believes it needs to change ISP companies.

Today, the major player in domain hosting is Network Solutions www.networksolutions.com. There are other domain hosting companies in existence; however, Network Solutions has an established method most carriers and IT professionals rely on. By keeping your business domain in a third party site, your web-based activities receive better protection and stability. Regardless of your business size and technology needs, we recommend clients use ISP's for their connection needs and hosting companies for servicing their domains. Please call RAM anytime for more information.



“I never perfected an invention that I did not think about in terms of the service it might give others... I find out what the world needs, then I proceed to invent.”

Thomas Edison

Find Out More...

- I need some assistance with my domain and hosting strategies.
- I'm interested in RAM quoting my company a price for my telephone service.
- I'm interested in learning more about RAM's Professional Services.