RAM COMMUNICATIONS INC.

# Telecom Tips: Making Private Circuits Truly Private

When you purchase a private network from a carrier you are purchasing security. It's built in, right? Not so fast.

## The Truth About Managed Networks

**Someone has to manage your Managed Networks.** Carriers have provided networks (frame relay, IP-sec, MPLS) for years now. Networks can take a lot of resources to design, implement and maintain. For most enterprises it makes sense to hire the carrier to establish the network. However, the network can only be as secure as the people who can touch it. You must keep this fact in mind. All of the technicians, NOC managers and other support personnel can see your packets as they traverse your network. *Ultimately, you need to trust someone to handle your vital information. But that doesn't mean you can't take additional precautions.*

**Your traffic may travel with other traffic too.** Here's a great reason you want to choose an experienced carrier and team in creating your private networks. Mistakes can happen. Choose your carrier wisely and consider the fact that in order to manage all their clients' traffic efficiently, at some point, the carrier has to send all traffic over common routers. As long as each client's data streams are tagged correctly (with each client's unique information) the packets should get to the proper endpoints. However, if any information is not coded properly, you may get someone else's traffic on your LAN or vice versa. This isn't a common occurrence but it happens from time to time. If you already use a Managed Network and have ever seen any kind of connection failure or dropped packets it may have been due to a misconfigured router. What happened to your packets?

## Suggestions:

You may consider encrypting your packets. Encrypting your traffic before it hits the managed network ensures an extra layer of security in the event one of the above scenarios takes place. There are additional configuration and gear required for this arrangement. In short, take advantage of the QoS architecture in your MPLS network to properly handle your encrypted data stream. If there are any particular data you don't want anyone to see, assign those to your encrypted stream on your routers and to the network routers. You will need to test the performance with your carrier as part of your network implementation.

## Benefits:

You will spend a little more money and time establishing your own encryption. However, the gain in security is worth the extra work. If there's any compromise on the carrier network, at least your vital information is secure. Despite every carrier's best intension, no one will care for your information as much as you do.