March 9, 2004

via electronic mail

Mr. Rick Kemper
Director of Technology and Security
Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association
1250 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036

Re: Critical Need for Back Office System Review & Updates in Advance of Migration
     from ESNs to MEIDs

Dear Rick,

This letter is written to update you of issues related to the migration from Electronic Serial Numbers (ESNs) to the next-generation numbering resource, MEID (Mobile Equipment Identifier), and of the **critical need for participation by the service provider/ clearinghouse/ manufacturer community to ensure this migration goes smoothly**. This participation is particularly important given **that software for back-office billing and roaming applications may need to be updated and tested well in advance of MEID-capable handsets being deployed.**

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & NEED FOR MEID--ESN is a 32-bit number originally invented for AMPS, with the numbering pool consisting of 256 distinct manufacturer blocks of approximately 16 million unique equipment identifiers that are "burned" into handsets. In addition to handset authentication, ESNs are typically used by service providers for mission-critical applications including Billing, Fraud Detection, Inventory and Activation. ESNs are a global resource originally assigned by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and administered by TIA on behalf of the FCC since 1997.

It has been known for some time that the ESN-resource is diminishing and will be exhausting. With the need for more numbering resource to accommodate future subscriber growth beyond the finite ESN pool, industry developed a next-generation 56-bit numbering resource. The MEIDs larger 56-bit structure should allow for enough serial numbers to last well into the future. Through global cooperation with industry bodies including the Third Generation Partnership Projects (3GPP, 3GPP2) and the formation of a Numbering Joint Experts Meeting (JEM) in April 2002, it was ensured there would be compatibility with 3G terminals for multi-technology devices (GSM, CDMA, W-CDMA, TIA-136-E).

PREPARATION/TIMEFRAMES FOR MEID MIGRATION--TIA expects devices programmed with MEIDs to be entering the marketplace as early as the 3rd quarter, 2004. TIA Engineering Committee TR-45, through its Ad Hoc Group (AHG) ESN/UIM/MEID charged with addressing the migration issues *is urging carriers to carefully review their "back office systems and determine how the migration to MEIDs will affect their systems.*

These systems would include (but are not limited to) Billing, Fraud Detection, Inventory and Activation. The TR-45 ESN/UIM/MEID AHG is interested in any significant issues that are discovered in these system reviews.   If you would like to alert the AHG on significant issues as they develop, please contact Gary Pellegrino, Chair (gary@commflowresources.com, 908.707.0718).

ESN exhaust is conservatively estimated to occur as soon as the first quarter of 2005, although conservation guidelines developed by TR-45 ESN/UIM/MEID AHG have been implemented by the ESN Administrator to help the industry plan for a smooth migration. Efforts include several bullet points identified in a first industry outreach letter dated December 18, 2003 (attached for reference).

These simultaneous efforts are intended to delay the exhaust of the ESN resource and help ensure that a strategy for migration to assigning MEIDs for new wireless devices is available in time for implementation and testing with back-office systems. To assist in this initiative, an outreach effort was started in late February to the clearinghouse community.

The ESN assignment and MEID assignment process will be done in parallel to ensure a smooth migration from ESNs to MEIDs. Once ESNs exhaust, only MEIDs will be assigned. For more information regarding the migration, please check http://www.tiaonline.org/standards/esn where a link to a MEID page will be available in the near future.

Thank you for your proactive participation in this process and please contact us at your convenience to discuss these matters further.

Best regards,

   /s/
Cheryl Blum (cjblum@lucent.com)
Chair, Engineering Committee TR-45

   /s/
Bill Belt (bbelt@tiaonline.org, 703.907.7790)
Director, Wireless Communications Division (WCD)

   /s/
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Staff Director, WCD and ESN Administrator

Cc: Jim Caile, Chair TIA WCD
        Gerry Flynn, Vice-Chair TIA TR-45
        Peter J. MacLaren, Vice-Chair TIA WCD
        Dan Bart, Esq., TIA Senior Vice President, Standards and Special Projects
        Henry Cuschieri, UIM Manufacturer's ID Code Administrator
        Gary Pellegrino, Chair, TR-45 ESN/UIM/MEID AHG

Preliminary Recommendations/Guidance for Service Providers in Assessing Readiness for MEIDs

1. Be aware that 32-bit ESN will transition to MEID and what a 56-bit MEID is.
    Are you able to identify a decimal 128 (H80) manufacturer code number as a MEID (pseudo ESN) if seen in processing?

2. Investigate all internal use of ESN application (Fraud, Revenue Assurance, IT, Repair & Customer Service, Network, Roaming, Marketing e.g., mobile manufacturers, publications, service contracts, etc.) & then track/resolve any needed use of MEID application where appropriate.

3. Make sure your Rating, Billing & Clearing vendor is MEID aware & track/resolve any issues related to the migration.

4. Make sure your Infrastructure vendors implement MEID supporting system updates when available.

5. Test MEID & Pseudo ESN processing when/where able to.

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