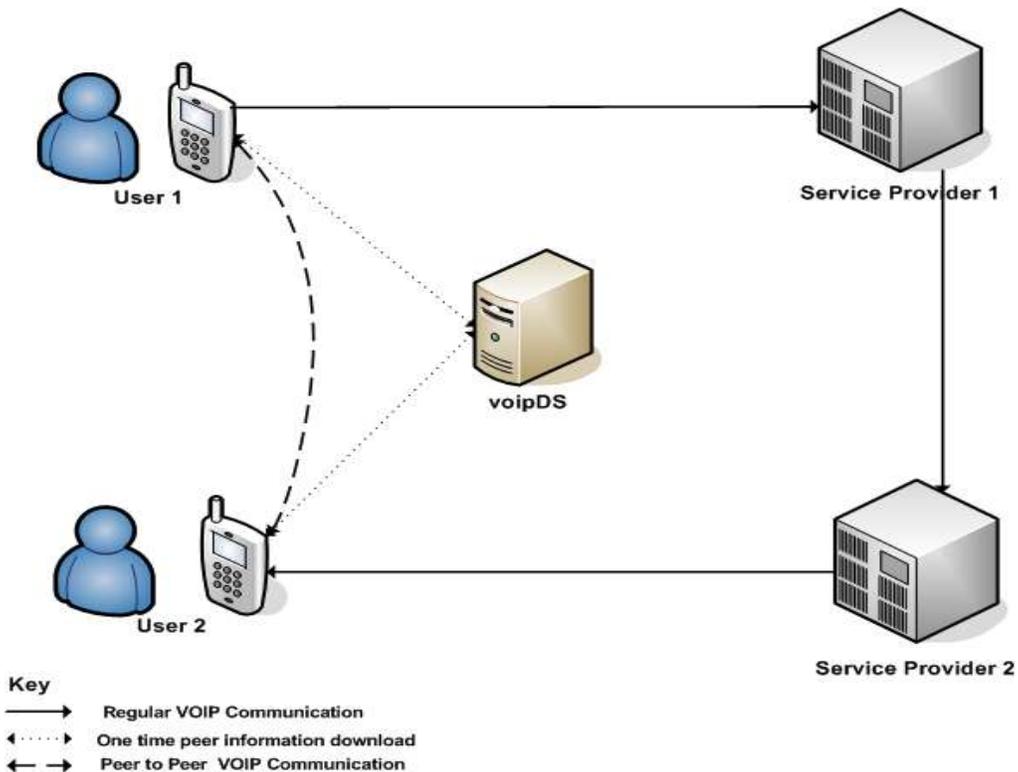**Press release**

Peer-to-peer VOIP communication is here

It is now a well known fact that VOIP is next best thing since Internet. In next couple of years majority of voice communications across the world would be based on VOIP . Home users and Businesses would be using VOIP devices for their day to day communications. VOIP devices are basically software IP phones, hardware IP phones and applications like Asterisk (http://www.asterisk.org)

One of the lesser known feature in VOIP devices is the ability to make peer-to-peer call. That is the ability to call other VOIP user without going through a provider. The reason peer-to-peer call is interesting because of the fact that they are 'free' as in 'free beer'. So this means any VOIP user can make a peer-to-peer call to any other VOIP user across the world without going through their provider *and its 'free'*.

This sounds very interesting but in order to make peer-to-peer calls globally possible, there should be a way for VOIP users to discover other VOIP users. Once discovered, there should be an easy way to add this person to his/her address book. If these steps can be accomplished in a relatively simple manner then global peer-to-peer VOIP communication will be a reality.

Voice over IP Directory Services (http://www.voipds.org)
Voice over IP Directory Services (voipDS, pronounced as 'voip' D S) exactly addresses the above needs. voipDS is a central repository that stores 'peer connection information' of all users. 'Peer connection information' is a set of connection details that is required to make peer-to-peer call. voipDS also provides an easy way to search other VOIP users. Peer connection information can be downloaded for selected users and their connection details can be added to address book. A peer-to-peer call can then be made merely by selecting the user from the address book.

Usage scenarios
Scenarios where this would be useful are numerous. Normal home users can search for their friends and family members on voipDS. They can then add their peer connection information to their address books. Thereafter, calls can be made by just selecting friends and family members from the address book and *all calls are free*. Similarly Businesses can find their Retailers, Suppliers, Manufacturers etc on voipDS and establish peer-to-peer communication with them. This would drastically reduce their communication cost. voipDS also provides a way to securely share the internal phone book of the businesses. As an example, finance department of one company can talk to finance department of other company without going through a provider. This way options are endless.

Concerns
One of the concern is the privacy of the peer connection information stored at voipDS. If unauthorized persons get peer connection information, they can make unwanted calls. This is very similar to unsolicited marketing calls in todays world. To avoid this, voipDS provides a mechanism by which the owner of the peer connection information has complete control over who can get their information. When marked as 'private', peer connection information download requests require owners approval. By this way, the owner has complete control over who can call them.

Conclusion
The communication across the globe is going to be based on VOIP. Leveraging peer-to-peer capability in VOIP devices makes logical sense comparing the cost benefits. voipDS is poised to help peer-to-peer communication.

About Voice over IP directory Services
Voice over IP directory service is an open source community initiative. The goal is to provide an easy way to discover other VOIP users and establish peer to peer communication. For more details visit http://www.voipds.org

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