

The aforementioned facts show that ESS has made the jobs of organizations such as the FBI, NSA, and other phone company security forces easier. Tracing can be done in a matter of microseconds, and the result will be conveniently printed out on the monitor of a phone company officer. ESS is also programmed to pick up any "foreign tones" on the phone line such as the many varied tones emulated by boxes.

ESS can be identified by a few features common in it. The 911 emergency service is covered in the later versions of ESS. Also, you are given the dial tone first when using a pay phone unlike that of SxS. Calling services like call forwarding, speed calling, and call waiting are also common to ESS. One other feature common to ESS is ANI (Automatic Number Identification) for long distance calls. As you can see, ESS is basically the zenith of all switching systems, and it will probably plague the entire country by the early 1990's. Soon after, we should be looking forward to a system called CLASS. This switching system will contain the feature of having the number of the person that is calling you printed out on your phone.

What have I concluded about these switching systems? Well, they are not good enough. I know a few people employed by the phone company, and I know for a fact that they do not have enough time these days to worry about code users, especially in large, metropolitan areas. So, I will go out on a limb here, and say that a large portion of people will never have to worry about the horrors of ESS.

New Gizmo Can Change Voice Gender

The most amazing device has turned up in the new Hammacher Schlemmer catalog: the telephone voice gender changer. What it does is change the pitch of your voice from, say, soprano to bass -- a most efficient way to dissuade an obscene phone caller just as he's getting warmed up. That is not the same as running a 45 rpm. record at 33. In digital conversion, the pitch can be changed without altering the speed.

The device runs on a 9-volt batter and attaches to the telephone mouth piece with a rubber coupler that takes but a moment to slip on and off. With the changer switched on, says Lloyd Gray, a Hammacher Schlemmer technical expert, "the effect is similar to what you hear when they interview an anonymous woman on television and disguise her voice by deepening it." "It's better for changing a woman's voice to a man's than the other way around," Gray said. A man can use it to raise the pitch of his voice, but he still won't sound like a woman."

A man could, however, use the changer to disguise his voice. But with the device set on high, Gray's voice still could be identified as his own. On low, his normal tenor became so gravel like that the words were unintelligible.

92. Remote Informer Issue #5 by Tracker, Norman Bates, and Ye Cap'n

AT&T Rates

WASHINGTON -- American Telephone & Telegraph Co. proposed Tuesday to lower its interstate long-distance rates by an average of 3.6% to reflect reduced costs in connecting to the local telephone network. The largest decrease -- 6.3% -- would be seen in day time prices "Because of the need to make those rates more competitive," AT&T said.

Rates for calls made during evening hours would drop 2.2% and calls made during the late night and weekends would be cut by 0.8%, the company said. The rate reductions would take effect Jan. 1, if they are approved by the Federal Communications Commission. Reacting to the proposed price cuts, MCI Communications Corp. and US Sprint Communications Co., the nation's second-largest and third-largest long distance companies respectively, said their response would depend on what the FCC finally approves but both said they intended to remain competitive with AT&T. AT&T, the nation's largest long-distance company, proposed to the FCC that its rates drop as much as \$800 million, but AT&T said the exact amount will depend on the access charges the FCC allows the local telephone companies to collect from long distance carriers, which must pay the fees to hook into the phone local network.

AT&T has challenged the new access rates filed by the regional Bell operating companies, contending they are more than \$1 billion too high. In proposing its new rates, the long-distance leader told the FCC it expects local companies' access fees to fall by at least \$200 million -- which would amount to an average rate reduction of less than 1%. But the company said it believes the FCC will order an additional \$600 million in reductions based on AT&T's challenge.

"We're confident the FCC will recognize that access charges filed by the local telephone companies need to be substantially reduced, which would mean more savings for our customers," said Larry Garfinkel, AT&T vice president for marketing. He said the company filed its proposed rates based on disputed charges because "we wanted to let the public react ... and further to let the FCC have full knowledge of where we were heading given our expectation that we had a valid basis for our dispute."

AT&T's long-distance rates have fallen by about 34% since the company was stripped of its local operating companies by an antitrust decree nearly four years ago. Since then, phone rate payers have been paying a larger share of the costs of maintaining the local network through monthly subscriber line charges, now \$2.60 for residential customers. That has reduced the long-distance companies' share of local network expenses, which they pay in the form of access charges. Jack Grubman, a telephone analyst with PaineWebber Inc., said AT&T's proposal targets business customers because "that's where the competition is and where the better (profit) margins are." In addition, it aims to keep the pressure on competition in international calling by extending discounts to more customers. Grubman added that, if the company's rate proposal is approved by the FCC, he would expect no further cuts in AT&T rates in 1988. Wendell Lind, AT&T administrator of rates and tariffs, said the cuts for business and residential customers are about the same because business cuts are offset by a proposed \$128 million increase in AT&T's private line rates.

AT&T is the only long-distance company whose rates are regulated by the FCC, but its prices set the pace for the industry. Though AT&T is far larger than any of its competitors, its market share has been declining since divestiture and the company now says it serves about 75 percent