

# New Telephone Numbers for London

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## More numbers for London??!!

- YES!
- By September 2005 likely that Ofcom will have run out of 'free' (020) 7 number blocks
- Why?
  - Continued high demand from new entrants
- Couldn't Oftel/ Ofcom have seen this coming?
  - We did in 1997
  - hence change from 0171 & 0181 to 020
  - that move from 7-digit to 8-digit local numbers increased total London capacity five-fold
  - but it still needed to be brought to life as we are now doing
- **How did we get here?**

## 1959

- Postmaster General created **01 for London**



- **Potential for 10 million London Numbers**



## 1965

- Direct Dialling replaces BELgravia, GULiver, LORds etc etc with *numbers*



- **But STILL only potential for 10 million London Numbers!**



**1989**

- BT/ Ofcom split London into 071 & 081 - Inner & Outer London



**NOW potential for 20 million London Numbers**



## 1995

- All Geographic numbers gain a '1' after the '0': London becomes: 0171 & 0181



**BUT no increase in the amount of numbers!**

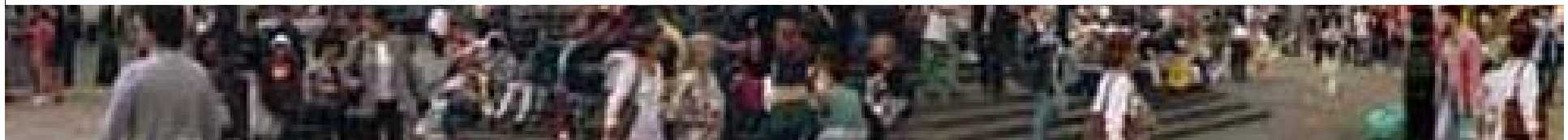


## 1997 - effective April 2000

- Reunification of London as **020**



**Potential for 100 million London Numbers**



## ***Potential* for 100 million**

- Using (020) 7 & (020) 8 still only 20 million numbers
- We have opened up 'National Dialling only' blocks (0200)...
- Demand remains high:
  - clear need to move public consciousness on to recognise '020' as Greater London area code
  - so opening up further sub-ranges causes minimal fuss



## Where are we now?

- **1997 Oftel statement** led to code change for Greater London from 0171 & 0181 to 020
  - Inner/ Outer split of London legally ended in 2000
  - therefore not appropriate to open up a new sub-range just to replace '7' & so perpetuate an obsolete split
- **Why (020) 3 as first new range?**
  - for conservation reasons we only open up sub-ranges one at a time (eg, only '7' and '8' are currently open in London)
  - we avoid the '1' and '9' ranges as these can clash with diallable Access Codes (eg, 1471) and emergency services (999)
  - past experience indicates that if there is room for confusion with 01 numbers it will happen (or we will be criticised for it). There are 01202 (Bournemouth), 01204 (Bolton), 01205 (Boston), 01206 (Colchester) codes, but no 01203 code (this was Coventry before it changed to 024).

## Actions 2004

- **13 July 2004** Ofcom announced:
  - There will be a new sub-range for **all** Greater London (ie, the 020 area)
  - It will be '3' - ie, numbers will appear as (020) 3xxx xxxx
  - At point of issue for the new range, Ofcom will cease to allocate numbers from '7' & '8' sub-ranges for use in London (such numbers will continue to be available from Comms Providers with 'stock')
  - launch date: **Summer 2005**
- From February 2004 onwards Ofcom has been undertaking regular research tracking for London/ 020 perceptions and use (now quarterly +)

## Focus Groups research

- Research undertaken in July - in Camden, Croydon & Manchester (18 groups - 66 people)
- There appear to be two principal routes for communicating the new range:
  - The code for London is 020 and current inner London numbers begin with '7' and outer London numbers begin with '8'. Newly supplied numbers will begin with '3'
  - Current London numbers are (020) 7 and (020) 8 and newly supplied numbers will begin with 020 3
- Communications should not reinforce mistaken beliefs
- Communications need to state **loud & clear** that current numbers will not change - that the new range will be additional
- Need for a basic reason for the additional range – eg, London is growing and needs more numbers...
  - Business customers tended to prefer shorter communications
  - Residential customers tended to require more lengthy explanations

## Consumer Research - Quarterly Residential survey

- Research conducted August 2004 (following Ofcom press announcement)
- *samplings will continue to be taken on a quarterly basis (see Communication Strategy slides)*

### Key Findings:

- 1 in 10 UK adults are aware of '(020) 3'
- In Greater London this increased to 1 in 5
  
- 30% UK adults recognise London code as beginning 020
- Half UK adults thought there was a difference between (020) 7 and (020) 8
- Three quarters of London adults thought there was a difference
  
- BUT 47% Londoners omit the 020 when dialling fixed to fixed line

## Consumer Research - Quarterly SME survey

- Research conducted August 2004 (following Ofcom press announcement)
- Again, *samplings will continue to be taken on a quarterly basis (see Communication Strategy slides)*

### Key Findings:

- SMEs were asked about the way their telephone number appears in company stationery/ business cards etc: 72% SMEs with a London dialling code have the correct code printed on company stationery
- PBX programming was explored:
  - 69% of businesses who do not know how their PBX is programmed re London code
  - 11% have programmed the correct dialling code (020)
  - 6% have both '0208' and '0207' programmed as codes for London
- businesses with incorrect programming would be at a disadvantage when '(020) 3' is introduced as it would not be recognised by their PBX - leading to a rejected call.

## What happens next?

- Ofcom will continue to monitor consumer understanding
- There will be an **October 2004 Press Release**:
  - Give a specific "launch" date for (020) 3 and closure of (020) 7 & (020) 8
  - in Summer 2005
  - Publish supporting research
- Other work:
  - Letters from Ofcom to telcos to ask for their help
  - Meetings with stakeholders
  - Ensure a clear, targeted & developing information campaign
  - Further timed announcements
- **Anyone interested in helping spread the message...  
please see me after or e-mail me:**

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