

Press Release

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## **BUSINESSES URGED TO TAKE ACTION TO COMBAT £1.5 BILLION COST OF “PHREAKING”**

Businesses should take steps to combat the £1.5billion cost of telephone hacking – a growing phenomenon known as “phreaking”.

While the hacking of celebrities’ phones may have grabbed the headlines, the impact on UK businesses is becoming an increasingly serious issue.

Phreaking is big business with organised criminals from around the world using sophisticated equipment to attack telephone systems to use their trunk lines for their own purposes.

The criminals use the hijacked lines to gain access to high cost telephone destinations and services throughout the world, re-selling the services to unsuspecting users.

One technology company revealed that criminals had run up a bill of more than £10,000 in just four days at his expense – a figure which is believed to be the average bill facing victims of phreaking.

Tom Cullen, Managing Director of leading telecoms company Digitel Europe, said:  
“Businesses have seen a dramatic increase in telephone hacking in the past couple of years. While the hacking of celebrities’ phones may get the headlines, the problem goes much deeper with organised criminals now believed to be costing UK businesses £1.5billion annually.

“The vast majority of the hacking activity is targeted at telephone system features such as Direct Inward System Access (DISA) and Voicemail Access. If left unprotected, these features can allow access to a company’s telephone lines and services.

“While there is no easy solution to this problem, there are a number of steps businesses can take to try and protect themselves from the scourge of phreaking.”

A report by the Communications Fraud Control Association (CFCA) named the UK as one of the top five destinations targeted by phreakers. The other countries in the top five are Cuba, Lichtenstein, India and the Philippines.

The Digitel Europe Group is based in Birkenhead, Merseyside, and employs 25 people. The group increased turnover from £2.95million in 2010 to £3.2million in 2011 and is forecasting further growth of 18 per cent during 2012.

The company’s Intelligent Network (INET) delivers a range of innovative communications solutions to SMEs. INET is a service hosted in the Cloud within the network removing the need for businesses to invest in expensive capital equipment.

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- For an interview with Tom Cullen or further information, please contact Lucy Mason or Nick Mason at Mason Media on 0151 239 5050 or 07903 197402.