

U.S. to open door to VoIP wiretaps

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New rules allowing wiretaps of Voice over Internet Protocol conversations are expected to be issued by U.S. authorities in 2007.

The Federal Communications Commission ruling issued late last Friday ruled that VoIP providers will have to make their technologies "wiretap-ready" so that U.S. police can quickly tap into computer communications by suspected terrorists or other lawbreakers.

The FCC said VoIP services that interface with public telephone networks were under the jurisdiction of U.S. laws on wiretaps.

But the exact impact of the ruling remained unclear Tuesday. CNET.com pointed out that questions involve the obligations of universities, private companies and other forms of wireless Internet communications.

In addition, there is the question of whether VoIP providers who can't meet the 2007 requirements will have to shut their systems down.

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