Dialing dormphone; numbers to change

Several major changes in MIT's Dormitory Telephone Service (DTS or Dormphone) will take effect prior to the arrival of freshmen for R/O week, including number changes and reduced service.

MIT has a dual telephone system. Phones in lobbies, academic buildings and offices are served by the MIT "Centrex" system. Phones may be dialed directly from the outside by dialing 617-253-XXXX, or from other MIT Centrex extensions by dialing 5-XXXX. Phones in each student's dorm room and in some student activity offices are served by DTS. The payment for a dormphone is part of dormitory room rental.

The two systems are interconnected with only a number prefix necessary to transfer between them. Beginning during August, MIT extension (3-XXXX) can be reached from dormphones by dialing 253-XXXX. Dormphone (XXXX) can be reached from Centrex Extensions by dialing 5-XXXX.

Other services available from each type of telephone are listed in MIT Student Directory and the MIT Telephone Directory.

Service cutback

As announced last spring, MIT operator service between midnight and 7:30am was discontinued July 1. This prevents any dormphone from being reached by callers outside MIT, since operator assistance is required. They will, however, still be able to call other dormphones inside MIT. Outstanding credit card calls will still be possible from dormphones.

Telecommunications officials suggest students wishing to be able to receive calls during those hours contact New England Telephone and ask for a regular residential phone.

Changing numbers

In addition, about half of the phones in the Dormphone system had their numbers changed over the summer. The "O" exchange has been eliminated, as had most three-digit dialing. Now only dormitory and special services will be available by dialing three digits.

Also, the non-coincidence of Centrex extension numbers and dormphone numbers has been eliminated. Dormphones have in recent years taken the form XXXX, 9XXX or OXXX. The highest MIT extension possible is 7999. Starting this month, however, there will be dormphones starting with 7, making it vital that incoming callers know whether they are calling a dormphone or an MIT extension.

MIT telecommunications analyst Dennis Baron said the renumbering was made necessary because the system had "reached its capacity" under the old numbering system.

The system had to be expanded by 300 numbers, from 2200 to 3500 to accommodate the New West Dormitories. The change required installation of new equipment, both DTS exchange switching equipment and cable connecting the dorms, according to Baron.

"This is the largest job we have ever undertaken" Baron said, but he expressed confidence that the installation would be completed before the arrival of freshmen.

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