What is Peering

Peering is the connection of one network operator to another network operator to exchange traffic originated by each network operator.

The vast majority of peering does not attract traffic charges - it is known as “settlement-free peering”.

Peering takes place in two forms:

1. **Private peering**
2. **Public peering**

Private Peering

Private peering is where there is a private connection between the two network operators for the purpose of exchanging traffic.

The physical interconnect is owned jointly by the two operators, and can range from a simple fibre or copper cross-connect in a datacentre, to a long haul link (fibre optic or wireless) between each operators data centre.

The two operators who are peering with each other manage the link, the traffic levels, and what routes are reachable by the other operator.

Private refers to the link being entirely a business relationship between the two operators - there is no third party involved in conducting this interconnect.

This is a very common form of peering, and is usually the first steps a newcomer network operator will make beyond their transit connection to their upstream provider.

Private peering has considerable benefits for both operators - traffic exchanged between the peers does not have to traverse their respective upstreams and therefore attracts no traffic charges.

Public Peering

Public peering takes place at a public peering point, commonly known as an Internet Exchange Point (IXP).

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