



5 Things you may not have known About VoIP

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) allows you to make phone calls using the internet. David Hill, Chairman of Cloud Net, a business phone systems provider which offers a full switchboard from £8.50 per month plus calls and free IP phones, explores 5 things you may not know about VoIP.

1) VoIP and your PC

Not all VoIP systems need to be linked to your PC via a headset or Internet Protocol (IP) phone to make or receive calls. Your computer doesn't need to be on to make a VoIP call - by plugging a VoIP line into your router, VoIP calls can be made while the computer is off.

2) VoIP is the future

VoIP is growing fast. There are 100 million subscribers worldwide and 30% of all calls made in some European countries use VoIP.

3) A cost effective solution

VoIP is either free or very cheap compared to traditional phone systems. VoIP can be used to make free calls to other users within a VoIP network, so Skype to Skype or Cloud Net to Cloud Net calls are free.

As users use the internet to make calls, international call charges are very low. All business VoIP providers will charge you for the use of their switchboard service, but there are some all inclusive deals which give you all features for one fixed cost

VoIP calls can be made using a headset only, but for business use, you will probably need a handset. A lot of VoIP providers will charge a one off cost for a handset which can be between £50 - £200. Cloud Net provide handsets for free.

4) Business VoIP is really easy to use

Your existing number can be switched to VoIP. Many hosted VoIP services provide online switchboards that manage all the functions and features of a traditional switchboard, such as call redirect, voicemail and voicemail to email.

When using an IP PBX (switchboard), software and functionality upgrades are provided automatically. Through an online switchboard, users can manage all switchboard features including their numbers, extensions, redirects and conference rooms.

VoIP is very quick to install and you can usually do it yourself. There is no need to have an installation engineer visit your home to install VoIP.

5) Some great features from VoIP

Call forwarding - VoIP can help you get calls wherever you are since most VoIP providers provide a call forwarding system, in case you can't reach your home phone or the power fails. Call forwarding sends calls to an alternative mobile or landline.

Voicemail to e-mail: When you receive a voicemail you are sent an email with the caller's number and name and an audio file containing their message. This way, you can listen to voice mails while you're away from your desk and in the order you want to.

Enhanced voice mail: When using one VoIP for business and personal calls, enhanced voicemail can be a great way to manage incoming messages, since you can set up different voice mail messages depending on the caller so that business and personal callers hear a different message.

Jargon buster

VoIP – Voice over Internet Protocol

IP – Internet Protocol

PBX – Private branch exchange, switchboard

This list was provided by David Hill, Chairman of business phone systems company Cloud Net (www.cloudnetuk.com). Cloud Net is the only plug and play hosted VoIP for small business telephone company in the UK.

They offer a straightforward and feature rich telephone system at a fixed price which provides small businesses with:

- Professional high quality telephone systems affordable for everyone
- Reduced cost of communication, making it free in many aspects
- Geographical numbers - any area code can be associated with any phone
- Complete integration with other technologies making unified communications a low cost reality
- A full switchboard at a fraction of the cost of a traditional switchboard