

5 Things You Always Wanted to Know About VoIP But Were Afraid to Ask

When I talk to people about VoIP, I usually find one or two people who know a lot about VoIP, a few who know a little, and many who think they know what VoIP is, but don't, or just plain have no idea.



Below, I have attempted to answer the top 5 questions I get about VoIP:

1. What in the world is it?

VoIP services convert your voice into a digital signal that travels over the Internet. If you are calling a regular phone number, the signal is converted to a regular telephone signal before it reaches the destination. VoIP allows your office telephone system to work over your data network so that your phone system and computer system work in unison rather than as two separate entities.

2. Telephony? VoIP? What's the difference?

Learning the lingo is a first step toward learning the benefits of this technology:

- **VoIP** refers to a way to carry phone calls over an IP data network, whether on the Internet or your own internal network. A primary attraction of VoIP is its ability to help reduce expenses because telephone calls travel over the data network rather than the phone company's network.
- **IP telephony** includes the full array of VoIP enabled services including your network of telephones plus related services such as billing and dialing plans; and basic features such as conferencing, transfer, forward, and hold. These services might previously have been provided by a PBX.
- **IP communications** go one step further by introducing business applications which enhance business communication such as unified messaging, integrated contact centers, and rich-media conferencing with voice, data, and video.
- **Unified communications** is the ultimate in communication technology incorporating such technologies as Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and presence along with mobility solutions to bring you a complete communication experience regardless of location, time, or device.

3. Do I still have a telephone on my desk?

Yes, if you would like one, but you don't HAVE to have one. Our VoIP systems include desktop software that allows you to dial a number with the click of a mouse. "What do you click on?" you may ask. The answer is simple. Our software packages sync with your Outlook contacts (or any other database of contacts you may have) so that every number you need is only a mouse-click away. Additionally, our software packages enable drag and drop call transferring, drag and drop conference calling, call recording, one-click voice mail retrieval, and myriad other handy features.

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4. Can I use VoIP service away from my office?

Of course you can! You can access your VoIP service through your laptop and cell phone anywhere you have internet service, which makes VoIP ideal for remote workers and professions involving travel or work away from the office. Furthermore, you can access all of your contacts, view the status of co-workers and employees regardless of their location, transfer calls, and enjoy conference calling, call recording, find/me follow me, and all the other software features.

5. Is long distance service free? I'll bet that's the only part that won't cost me a pretty penny.

Yes, in many cases long distance service is free. But there are many other cost savings associated with VoIP such as lower administrative costs because you are no longer dependent on your telephone provider to administer your system. Additionally, there are start up savings, network infrastructure savings, conferencing savings, and productivity benefits or savings.

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