



What is VoIP

And why should you be interested?

Bewcastle Consulting Ltd

What is VoIP?

VoIP is an acronym which stands for [Voice over Internet Protocol](#). It is a technology which allows you to conduct telephone conversations over the internet rather than to use dedicated telephone lines. The technology is also known as internet telephony.

You may be asking why you should be interested and why major enterprises and small organisations alike are investing in and adopting this technology. This is no longer a *wait and see* technology; it is being deployed right now. So what is it doing for those organisations who have adopted it?

Benefits

The major benefit which accrues from the adoption of a VoIP telephony system is the facilities that it brings. Now, small businesses can benefit from communications capabilities hitherto only available to the "big boys". Our slogan **Big business communications at small business prices** says it all. So how has this become possible?

Internet telephony solutions inherently offer these high-end facilities on entry-level products, enabling even the smallest organisation to gain the benefits enjoyed by the large corporations.

In addition, many adopters of the technology are showing significant cost savings though, perhaps surprisingly, this is often not the greatest motivation for adopting a VoIP-based telephone solution.

Solution Options

There are two deployment options open to small businesses wishing to adopt VoIP-based telephony.

Owned – You buy your own VoIP-PBX (also known as an IP-PBX) in much the same way as you would buy an ordinary PBX. You are responsible for its maintenance and proper operation.

Hosted – This option allows you to have all the benefits and facilities of VoIP telephony without the capital outlay of a PBX. You access telephone services from a TSP (a Telephone Service Provider) in much the same way as you use the services of an ISP for internet access. Like the internet, you pay for the service as a monthly fee.

Both provide the same kinds of benefits and facilities and both are available from Bewcastle Consulting.

Which option you go for is dependent upon a number of factors, notably the number of extensions you need and the anticipated number of simultaneous external calls you are likely to have. In addition, you may wish to have some control over call routing or to build in some resilience. Bewcastle Consulting can advise you, based on your current and predicted calling pattern.

Features

It is the features offered by VoIP telephony which makes it so attractive to small businesses. Obviously, VoIP telephony solutions offer all the facilities you get from an ordinary PBX but here are just some of the things you can do that analogue PBXs may not.

- Hunt groups
- Call hold, transfer and forward
- Direct dial-in (DDI)
- Voice messages to callers
- Phone menus
- Voice mail
- Conference rooms
- Music on hold

Our leaflet [features of the Centrex VoIP Service](#) gives you an idea of the facilities offered and the business benefits of VoIP telephony.

Potential Cost Savings

The telephone companies get you two ways: they charge you for providing telephone lines and then they charge you again for using them. By and large, outside some restrictive service packages, telephone calls are metered and charges are levied based on distance and duration.

The internet uses a different charging model: you subscribe to the service and usage thereafter is un-metered. Within all practical limits, your usage is unfettered. Surfing the web is not metered and you can download web pages from all over the world without a usage charge. VoIP telephony uses the same charging model; ie you subscribe to the service (that might be a hosted solution or your own PABX), rent broadband lines and that's it. No call charges for the calls which are routed over the internet. If you have a number of remote offices and each office is VoIP enabled, then all your intra-office calls are free.

Of course, you will also need to call conventional telephone users who are not VoIP-enabled, or mobiles, and there is a charge for these, but even so these charges are generally lower than the equivalent BT tariff for such calls.

Please see our leaflet [The virtual Centrex Service - Call charges explained](#) for an explanation of chargeable calls

Our consultants can work with you to calculate any call charge savings which would accrue from adopting a VoIP-based telephone system.

Open Systems

Until now, businesses were obliged to choose their telephony solution from a range of proprietary solutions. The internet is one of the most standards-compliant systems in the world; and it is that feature which makes it so accessible. VoIP telephony systems have inherited this standards-based philosophy using existing internet standards where appropriate, and industry open standards for switches and equipment. This gives you supplier choice and a future-proof, open systems solution. This is not true of the closed Skype system.

Is it Skype?

In a word: no. VoIP is a technology, and Skype is a branded VoIP solution. Skype uses the internet to transmit telephone calls but is a closed user group aimed at the domestic/residential market. Vonage is another brand. By contrast, the VoIP products and services from Bewcastle Consulting are based on open systems.

Contact Us

To find out more about how you can benefit from VoIP telephony, please contact us:

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