

What's a VoIP?



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One of the fastest areas of change for business is enhanced telecommunications offerings.

VoIP is a technology that is coming of age. VoIP stands for "Voice over Internet Protocol". Basically it means making calls using the internet instead of telephone lines. A growing number of businesses are taking a look at VoIP to reduce costs. Many very large businesses are already using it.

Quality of service with VoIP is still of some concern. VoIP calls can sound as if the person missed the last syllable. But now at least a few providers will guarantee quality if you use a T-1 line. T-1's are high-speed digital lines.

It is extremely rare to lose dial tone with regular service. Even during an electrical power outage you usually have dial tone and can make calls. With VoIP if you lose power you will lose your ability to place or receive calls. And because VoIP is transmitted via the Internet, security and virus protection must be a high priority.

T-1 lines are a little more prone to problems than regular telephone lines. Therefore you could lose your service a little more often. Usually the problem can be corrected in a matter of hours. However, one local company had a T-1 problem that took three days to remedy. Back-up systems are available, but a cost-benefit analysis is necessary to justify such an implementation.

So who should look at VoIP? Businesses with multiple locations, high calling volumes, and/or the need for mobility.

Most VoIP equipment vendors have programs to locate your phone remotely or as an application on a laptop. Just imagine, you could be anywhere in the world with high-speed Internet access and have the ability to make and receive phone calls just as though you were in your office.

To demonstrate how fast things are changing, a start-up company in Reynoldsburg will soon be offering wireless digital phone service with VoIP and claim data speeds up to 25.5 MB/sec and very competitive rates.

Some experts predict that VoIP will be a leading telephony technology in five years.

DSL, Cable, Wireless, Dial-Up or T-1?

Pricing for Internet connection options are becoming very competitive. DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) is offered by telephone companies and is becoming the low-cost option. It allows your regular telephone line to send both digital and voice communication at the same time. One factor to ask the telephone company before signing up is how far you are from the CO (Central Office or a telephone switching station). If you are more than 5,000 feet service speeds drop off. If you are less than 1500 feet you should get the best speeds.

Cable usually has higher speeds. But if there are a lot of users in your area who are online at the same time the speeds can drop.

Wireless is becoming available in more places and some companies are offering it on a subscriber basis. The key here is the signal strength from the tower to your location. One telephone company provides wireless hot spots around the country for DSL users.

Dial-up is losing ground to competition from DSL. It is typically the slowest option.

Because of their prohibitively high cost, T-1's are used mainly by companies with very high usage.

Remember, you almost never get the high end speed advertised. If you want to check the speed of your service go to www.internetfrog.com/mypc/speedtest . You can see both download and upload speeds while you are online and no cost.

Online Speed Comparisons

	Download		Upload	
	From	To	From	To
Dial-Up		5 Kb		3.5 Kb
DSL	384Kb	6.0 Mb	128Kb	608Kb
Cable	768 Kb	8 Mb	128 Kb	512 Kb
Wireless		3 Mb		3Mb
T-1		1.5Mb		1.5Mb