

## Advantages Offered by Residential VoIP

Residential Voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) enables the home user to use their Internet connection make telephone calls. This advancement has made it possible for many people to have advanced calling features installed on their home phones at little or no extra cost. The cost of calling has also come down by anywhere from one-third to half the cost of conventional telephony service.

Among the many special features that are typically included with a VoIP phone service are caller ID, call waiting, call forwarding, and three-way calling. One of the most important abilities of VoIP is unparalleled number retention. A VoIP phone functions with equal ease regardless of real-world location so long as it is supplied sufficient Internet bandwidth. This is especially useful for users who don't want to lose a phone number when they move from one city to another. VoIP phones can be configured to receive all facilities that Web-based administration make possible.

A VoIP phone does, however, require a connection to broadband Internet. This is important because anything less does not have the necessary bandwidth to route voice traffic. Lower bandwidth connections will suffer from traffic congestion, which results in a severe reduction in voice quality.

There are hundreds of companies today that are providing residential VoIP phone service. Consumers must consider their needs before selecting one package over another. Fortunately, most service providers offer a variety of packages, making it easy to test the waters with a basic package providing limited usage. Then, if satisfied with the service, the user can upgrade to an unlimited USA and Canada calls package or an unlimited business package. This makes it easy to keep phone bills properly in line with individual needs.

Currently, the leading VoIP companies are AT&T CallVantage, Lingo, Verizon, Packet8, and of course Vonage. All these services come highly rated, so a customer is likely to find them more than adequate to supply their residential VoIP needs. However, there are several smaller VoIP companies that, while charging much lower rates, may have difficulty providing adequate service.

There are, of course, some disadvantages in switching to a VoIP phone. Typically it is necessary to register the address the phone will be at for location identification before it will be possible to make 911 calls. Also, the service is unlikely to work during power outages unless special provisions are made to supply it with another source of power. Furthermore, VoIP services may not offer white page listings, though some customers consider this an advantage.

However, the vast majority of consumers consider these to be minor inconveniences. They are significantly outweighed by the advantages of VoIP. In fact, it may not be wrong to say that the balance is tilted so far in favor of VoIP phones that it will only a question of time before VoIP home phones will replace landline phones altogether.