

VoIP A Global Telecommunications Revolution

It's being advertised as the biggest thing to hit the telecommunications market since the invention of the cellular telephone, but what is VOIP, how does it work and is it really that revolutionary?

VOIP is an acronym for Voice Over Internet Protocol, and it works by using your broadband internet connection to route your call more efficiently and cost effectively than conventional calling. The most common VOIP method works like this. Your standard telephone is connected to VOIP gateway, usually located somewhere in your house like a basement or utility closet. This gateway takes your voice and converts it from an analog signal to a digital signal. Once it exists in digital format it is broken down into smaller more manageable units known as "packets" and is transmitted over the internet the same way data is transmitted to and from your computer. These "packets" contain information about their final destination and have instructions to enable them to be put back together in the proper order. Once the packets reach the closest location to their desired destination they go back through another VOIP gateway which translates the signal back into an analog format. The gateway then passes the signal over to a PTSN (Public Telephone Switch Network) and your call is routed to the number that you dialed.

As people become more familiar and comfortable with VOIP calling newer and more advanced methods of communication will occur. In the very early stages of adoption are IP Based telephones. Instead of using standard telephone equipment with an RJ45 telephone connection to a VOIP Gateway these phone interfaces directly with the internet through a standard network connection. This enable you to use your phone at home unplug it when you leave and then plug it in at your office and your calls are automatically routed to the phone wherever it's plugged in. As WIFI networking becomes more prevalent expect to see wifi compatible cellular phones emerge to make calling even more portable.

While VOIP is still in the early stages of adoption there are still some hurdles that need to be overcome. The most important ones include emergency calling, and the need for uninterruptible power sources. However as VOIP and other IP based telephony continues to grow and advance, VOIP service providers will find ways to solve these problems.

About the Author

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