

Introduction - Home is where the wifi connects automatically

Imagine that every time you move house or go on holiday from now on, all of your personal effects instantaneously appear whenever, and wherever, you arrive. It would be as if your clothes, essentials and valuable devices are always available to you like a constant companion walk-in wardrobe.

Wouldn't that take the stress and limitations out of packing? The effort of lugging everything around with you, and inevitably forgetting that one item, would be no more.

While the laws of physics prevent quite this degree of magic and convenience, when it comes to your office space and essentials, the wizardry is very real.

“Buildings are now less about the ‘hardware’ of work – desks, partitions, technology, electricity, and so on, and more about the ‘software’ of work – the cultural, social and value system of the organisation.” - Future Workstyles and Future Workplaces, 2015.

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The Time of the Telecommuter

The word 'office' conjures up specific images of business, desks, the ringing of phones and the familiar frustration associated with uncooperative photocopiers. But why be tethered to a physical location five days a week, when all communications, information and action can take place in the 'cloud'?

"We are constantly responding to a changing business landscape, and the workplace can't hold that back."

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The concept and meaning of 'office' are already changing due to mobile integration and location independence. Hot-desking, working from home and other flexible working conditions are more frequently offered to employees, no longer as a 'perk' but as a key necessity in retaining a talented workforce².

A future definition of 'office' may soon be more of an abstract concept, such as being 'busy'.

Good hosted telephony brings flexibility and freedom, not just to day-to-day working conditions, but also to SMEs looking to scale-up operations, and start-up companies who might have been previously limited by expensive office rents.

It also provides a safety net in case of a disaster - your business does not need to close because a building is flooded or damaged. Your business is wherever your staff and their devices might be. With these freedoms, the sky's the limit.

Coming back down to earth for a moment, most of still use and need traditional office spaces, meeting rooms, and the technology required to get the job done. Even companies with a BYOD (bring your own device) policy still need a basic workspace, and most commercial lettings charge per square metre.

However, hosted telephony/VoIP makes several things so much easier - and cheaper.

office

/ˈɒfɪs/ 

Adjective

1. a state of being at work, irrespective of physical location
"I office, therefore I am"
synonyms: place of business, place of work, [workplace](#), [workroom](#), [studio](#); [More](#)
2. A space of digital confluence whereupon a person can carry out business
"Call me at 'the office'"
synonyms: [agile working](#), [mobile working](#), [workspace](#), [productive](#), [hot desking](#), [occupation](#),

A possible future definition of 'Office'.

¹ The Economist, 2015

² Business Matters - SME Business Magazine

VoIP can significantly lower your telecommunications costs while increasing your productivity. It also provides useful features and capabilities that conventional phone technology can't offer.

Though VoIP is quickly gaining popularity, some SMEs are still on the sidelines, concerned that VoIP audio quality is substandard, that the technology is difficult or expensive to implement, or that their phone service will be interrupted if their electricity goes out.

The truth is, VoIP's benefits far outweigh any potential drawbacks.

- **Small businesses that switch to VoIP reduce the cost of their local calls by up to 40%³**
- **Those small businesses reduce the cost of their international calls by up to 90%⁴**

Using VoIP can significantly reduce your telecommunications costs. Operating costs for VoIP service providers are significantly lower than for traditional phone companies, which must contend with the existing, expensive-to-maintain legacy phone infrastructure and costly industry regulations. With lower expenses, VoIP providers can charge much less than their competitors.

And with VoIP, businesses no longer have to maintain separate networks for phones and data--another significant money saver. Also, the costs associated with employee moves, adds and changes are essentially eliminated. All you have to do is move your IP phone (or traditional phone with a VoIP adapter) to a different broadband network jack and plug it in.

This is just the beginning. The ongoing maintenance and growth of your company is also facilitated by Hosted VoIP.

"Hosted unified communications are seeing strong interest up market as mid-market and larger enterprises evaluate and move more applications to the cloud." *

Obsolete handsets means outdated system expertise and outdated parts. Therefore, repairs can come in expensive and tardy. In an office move the costs involved with uninstalling, transporting and reinstalling an old system can be a significant percentage of the cost of a brand new, and far more flexible, system.

There is also future expansion to consider. Your company infrastructure should not be limited by your phone system, but this is the danger and the expense with legacy PBX.

* Diane Myers, principal analyst for VoIP, UC and IMS at Infonetics Research.

³ tech.co/voip-essential-business-today-2015-03

⁴ tech.co/voip-essential-business-today-2015-03

Simply The Best - Choose Your Provider Wisely

The tools you need to transform the way your company performs

It's important to be with a company who can provide full support as part of the package. For example, Inclarity operates a 24x7 customer support centre that constantly monitors their cloud telephony platforms to ensure high availability, reliability and quality of service.

In addition, for assisting growth and keeping costs fair, you need a hosted telephony service which provides a flexible, bespoke, pay-as-you-use (and only what you use) plan.

Here are some top features to look out for when making a decision:

1. Auto Attendant/IVR

Do you need someone to man the phones all the time? Then VoIP can do this for you. It's easy to set up an auto attendant receptionist redirecting the caller to the particular department or individual needed. They can direct calls to available agents, or select standard greetings, options for voicemail or directory services. VoIP can also give the impression of a much larger call centre, essentially presenting a bigger image.

2. Call Routing and Forwarding

Call routing and forwarding connects employees in the company no matter what their level or standing is. This is probably the most popular feature since it connects everybody wherever they are, and supports forwarding of calls from the office to mobile phones, in the form of voicemail, texts and email. As a bonus, this methodology is 100% secure because it removes the need for giving out personal mobile numbers or extensions while creating fast connections.

3. Conferencing

Audio and video conferencing has become commonplace within companies where any avoidance of travel costs adds to the bottom line. With VoIP, video is easily added to a voice call, enhancing the face-to-face aspect. Video and web conference calls are another enhancement for sales since it raises the visibility of the company, while garnering more potential prospects.

4. Schedule Based Routing

Use the phone system during the day and at night and route calls to various locations based on time. If you have an office location that is open until later than the rest, the calls can be routed to this office after X time which avoids missing out any of your important clients.

Startups - to infinity and beyond with VoIP

VoIP can cut initial startup costs for a new business by up to 90%*

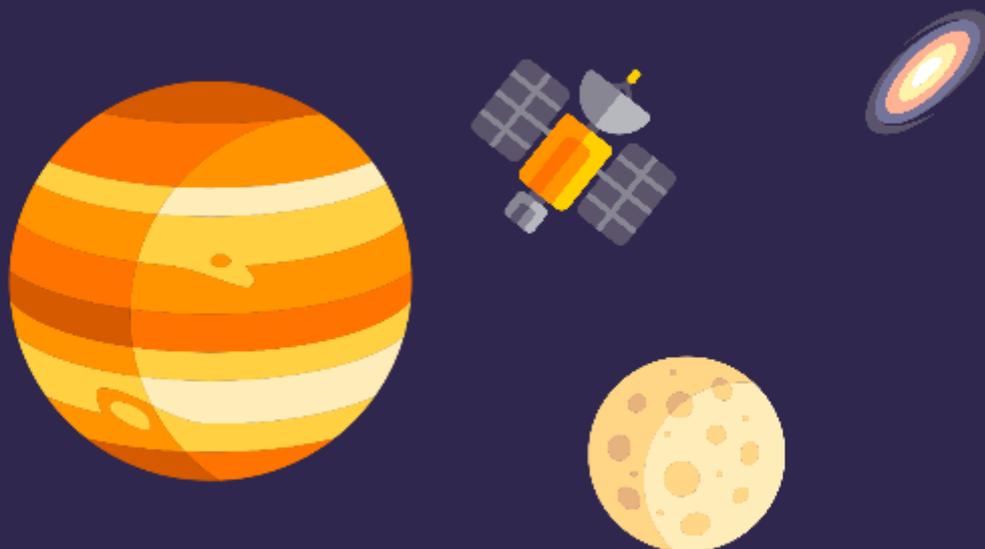
Location independence means great things for sole-trader entrepreneurs and their startup companies. With VoIP it is easy to present a polished image at a low cost. A good website and a speedy response time for emails and phone calls is all that's required to begin with, besides creativity and drive. But when it's time to expand, other than salaries, office rent is the biggest financial overhead. With more Startups enabled comes future SMEs.

With truly flexible, low cost and scalable hosted VoIP solutions, the professional 'shop window' of telephony, a good website and a business email account can start with just one user and grow from there, enabling a reach for new enterprises that previous generations couldn't have imagined.

Costs aside, the lifestyle afforded to employees of the modern day 'office' is also deeply attractive, especially to parents or primary carers who need more flexible hours, creating a happier and more diverse workforce. This set-up leads nicely into supporting a fully distributed team, so you can hire the best person for the job - even if they're thousands of miles away.

From the start, new enterprises have everything going for them. The drive to create something bigger and better is often what sparks the desire to launch a company in the first place.

"VoIP business phone service is a complete game-changer for startups!"
- Phil Trunnel, founder and CEO of Scriptcycle LLC



Growth occupies space in the minds of most business owners, whether they're budding young entrepreneurs or established industry veterans.

The traditional logistical nightmare of an office move. Harnessing the power of IT is advisable in most business situations, but it comes in particularly useful during the relocation process and reduces the down-time associated with a move.

While the digital revolution is making it easier for staff to operate away from traditional office confines, real scalability will always require physical expansion – especially when the focus is on selling products rather than services. However, moving from one location to another can be a headache for even the most organised of enterprises.

As is the case with moving house, the idea of relocating to another office space will always be daunting. But when the right tools are already in place – namely the cloud and BYOD – the process is likely to be a lot smoother.

Without the cloud, businesses are required to invest in and build their own IT infrastructure, then develop it as needs change. When the time comes to physically move, all of the costly equipment must be uprooted and reconfigured once in the new location. Not only does this take time and expertise, it's enough to cause severe disruption for any enterprise.

When the core elements of a business are powered by and stored using the web, however, the only equipment necessary will be computers and a reliable broadband connection – both of which require minimal time and effort to move and set-up. This is an incredible asset when searching for a new premises, as office space sold by the square metre will no longer have to account for the physical space taken by legacy hardware.

Lines can be moved, changed and added easily without all the hassle involved with a traditional phone system. And to make things even better, if you move office location you can take your hosted system with you and all your existing telephone numbers.

Employees can continue to work for a period of time without having to rely on having physical access to their desks. Businesses can also invest in wireless VoIP technology to reduce cabling costs and allow for rapid installation and employee mobility.

Hosted telephony increases the manageability, security, cost-effectiveness, and productivity for businesses that seek reliable communication during any time of upheaval.

Doesn't this make you feel lighter already?

Extreme Officing - work anywhere, anyhow.

- **From 2005 to 2012 there was a 79.9 percent increase in remote work.**
- **40 percent of work spaces will have embraced new business technology by 2016.**
- **Bring your own device programs are providing employees with autonomy and flexibility.⁵**

⁵ <http://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/telecommuting-statistics>

Conclusion

The future's light - the future's agile. And VoIP is the cornerstone of agility.

Agile working incorporates dimensions of time and place flexibility, but also involves doing work differently focusing on performance and outcomes – it is transformational. The Agile Future Forum whose aim is to provide leadership and practical support to disseminate agile working practices, considers these practices across the 4 dimensions of: time (when do people work?), location (where do people work?), role (what do people do?) and source (who carries out work?).

Over 3,000 professionals across a variety of sectors were quizzed⁶ on the importance of flexibility in today's working life. And SME respondents left very little doubt about the value of a flexible approach.

92 per cent of workers in SMEs said that, faced with a choice of two similar jobs, they would choose the one that offered flexible working. And a third of respondents (33%) also stated that they would have stayed longer in their previous jobs if flexibility had been offered.

Richard Morris, UK CEO, Regus, comments: "The days of the fixed hours, fixed location job are becoming as outdated as the office fax machine. A flexible role is one where the individual has more control over where and when they are productive. Managers must get better at measuring on results rather than on time spent at a specified desk.

"There is also the current business climate to consider. The economic uncertainty requires business to be more agile and nimble so operating with a fluid and flexible workforce, using available workspace, makes real commercial sense."

Agile working is not new, but it is a "new way of working". It can certainly be included under the umbrella term "smart working", which is about utilising the benefits gained from changing work practices, deploying new technologies and creating new working environments.

Behind the dissemination of new ways of working is progressive improvement in mobile, wireless and fixed line technology and related investments in fibre, bandwidth, server capacity, device capability, cloud computing and unified communication (or convergence).

In fact the network or digital world is increasingly seen as the place of work with the consequent rise of people working in the 'clouds' or 'virtual world'.

In short, hosted telephony means your office is wherever you want it be.

⁶ Business Matters Magazine