

VoIP -v- landline

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By Felix Lee

So what is VoIP?

VoIP stands for Voice over Internet Protocol. Basically it is placing phone calls over your internet connection. So those of you who are already naked with Bigpipe's unlimited broadband, but still want to keep your phone number?

Skype is probably the best known type of VoIP, but VoIP can be much more than that. The VoIP we talk about here work just like your traditional landline phone.

VoIP is essentially the same as a landline, same handset but over your Bigpipe connection. We have tried and tested this out with many people, and no one can hear anything different, even if we tell them beforehand it is VoIP.

Is there much of a difference between VoIP and a landline?

Nope, once you have set it up, you use it exactly like a traditional phone. You use the same phone you have always used, you keep the same number, dial it the same way and hear the same dial tones. It's a no brainer.

Almost every major telco have moved their phone services over to VoIP now. We at Bigpipe don't supply VoIP, but the two well known residential VoIP suppliers in the country are [2talk](#) and [WxC](#).

All three companies have plans starting from around \$11, which includes free local calls. 2talk and iTalk also includes free

national and international minutes in their plans. Great for keeping in touch with friends and family around the world.

Want to keep your landline number?

If you have phone and broadband with another company, you can switch to Bigpipe while keeping your number. How you do it depends on which companies supply your phone at the moment.

If you're using a traditional landline from Spark or a Spark reseller, you can sign up to our services, then immediately send us a message on our [support page](#). We'll switch your broadband over to us while keeping your landline in place. Once we have your broadband connected, you can contact your VoIP provider to port your number across to them.

Keen? Here's the setup cost.

All you will need to get an ATA (analog telephone adaptor) to turn plug existing phones into. Some modems have one built in (such as the excellent NetComm NF4V), otherwise you can buy one separately. The best ATA for home use is the [Cisco SPA112](#) which'll cost you around \$65.

Need those extra features?

Easy as, VoIP has the same capabilities and more, caller ID, call waiting, and voicemail are all free on your landline. You can also get extra features that you can't get with landlines, such as the ability to block calls without caller ID (goodbye telemarketers), and custom caller tunes (people who call you can hear your favourite music instead of the boring doot-doot, doot-doot while the phone rings).

What are the cons?

The biggest nip in the tail when it comes to VoIP is the quality of the hardware you purchase and your internet speeds. For the best quality calls, at least 30kbps speeds are required, this isn't much to ask for from an ADSL2+ and

upwards. So unless you have really really slow speeds, we suggest you move to Bigpipe's unlimited plans.

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