

Ask the Tech?

Question: *I'm thinking of switching to a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) phone plan to replace my business line at home. What kind of equipment and service plans will I need to make this happen?*

Answer: *There are a number of choices and advantages with VoIP products and service plans these days. The easiest way to start is to inform you that there is difference in the call quality of a VoIP connection versus a standard landline, somewhere between the quality of a cellular call and a regular phone call. Secondly, let's protect your pocket and discuss service plans.*

There are several major players in the VoIP market, including Packet8 and Vonage. Both offer monthly service plans with slightly different features. For example, Packet8 offers unlimited calling to the US and Canada for less than \$40 a month, while Vonage unlimited plan costs slightly more.

On the product side of things, you'll need an adapter, router (wired or wireless) or a specific device to connect your phone to your broadband connection. In some cases, you can use your existing phone or you can buy a special phone to take advantage of features like wireless access and, in the case of Packet8 videophone, video conferencing. If you are interested in setting up a wireless VoIP-compatible phone system throughout your home, you'll also need a wireless router to transmit the signal to and from your Internet connection. If it sounds like a lot, remember that VoIP lets you do a lot more than traditional phone. There are countless service plans and devices available so I suggest talking with a Business Pro to help you define your specific needs. This way, you'll get the right solution without spending more than you should.