

VoIP is Much More than Just Voice

Newer technologies are changing the way we connect to our world. From city streets to rural America, emerging technologies—like Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)—are changing the way we communicate and connect with the world around us. VoIP is an IP application that allows you to make voice calls using a broadband Internet connection instead of a regular phone line and offers many advantages over the legacy plain old telephone service (POTS).

Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS)	Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)
Operates on POTS over a circuit-switched network	Operates on an IP network (over your internet connection) using diverse routing
Separate local and long distance plans	No distinction between local or long distance calling.
Single location	Nomadic and non-nomadic service available. Both need access to a broadband Internet connection.
Only a California phone number can be associated with a location in California.	Customers may be able to pick what area code they want to have for a phone number, so a customer in California could choose to have a Florida number, a Texas number, or a California number – or they could have all three numbers terminate to their California location.
Features have to be managed by service personnel.	Features can be managed using a secure online portal.
Voice only service – other limited basic features available	VoIP combines voice with an abundance of enhanced and useful features: In addition to the traditional limited basic features, VoIP customers can integrate or collaborate with other applications such as email, web browsers, instant messenger, social-networking apps, and much more. Some examples of this seamless collaboration include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voicemail delivery via email in either audio or text • Incoming calls ring multiple phone numbers at the same time • Multiple phone numbers can ring in a specified sequence • Transfer calls you have already answered to another phone • Personalize Caller ID displays by assigning a name with a number • Click-to-call service on a website • Voice call button embedded in an email • Displaying presence information on a contact list
Voice-grade service, with narrow-band audio quality.	Wide-band audio technology allows users to hear a wider range of frequencies that are not possible with POTS. This is especially beneficial for individuals with hearing loss. ¹
Requires calls to be answered by a person or answering machine	VoIP allows for call routing to another phone, such as a cell phone, enhanced voicemail, message transcription, among other features.

Although both provide voice service, VoIP allows consumers to connect in ways that POTS does not.

- Consumers across America are increasingly choosing newer technologies—like VoIP—to connect and communicate, and are moving away from older ones, especially POTS.

By the end of 2013:

- 50.1 percent of **residential wireline phone connections** in the U.S. were VoIP-based.²
- Traditional POTS voice lines had declined by approximately 7 million from 2012 to 2013. Over the last five years, the number of POTS voice lines has declined by an average of nearly 14 percent per year.³

In the first half of 2015:

- Nearly half (47.4%) of American homes no longer used a wired connection and had instead chosen to communicate with only wireless technologies.⁴

1. http://www.about.att.com/content/csr/home/blog/2016/04/improving_communicat.html#sthash.qEMw5mVH.dpuf

2. FCC Local Competition Report, October 2014, Status as of December 31, 2013, https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-329975A1.pdf, accessed January 8, 2016

3. Ibid

4. CDC, Wireless Substitution Early Release of Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, January-June 2015, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless201512.pdf>, accessed January 8, 2016