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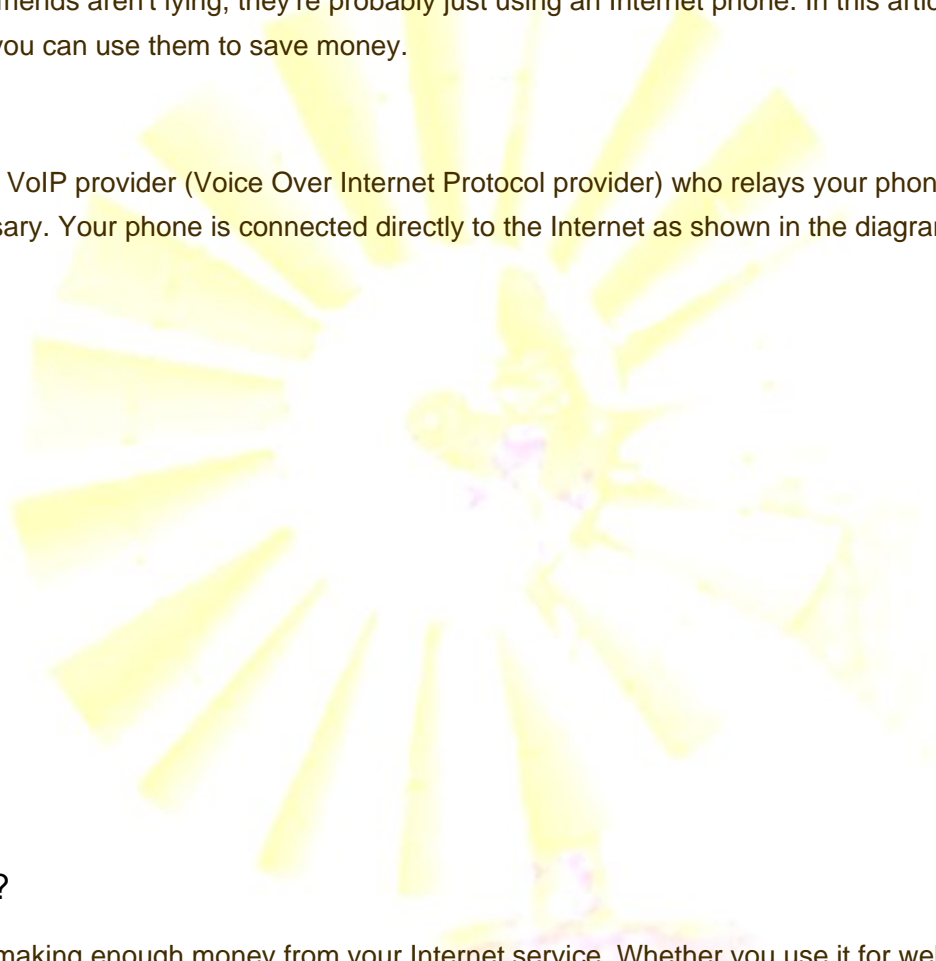
What is an Internet Telephone?

By [Roger Keays](#), 9 April 2009

You've heard about people with ridiculously low telephone bills, quoting prices like 10c untimed nationally and minute internationally. Naturally, you don't believe them. How could a phone company possibly make money at those prices? Well, your friends aren't lying, they're probably just using an Internet phone. In this article we explain how they work and how you can use them to save money.

How Does It Work?

Internet phones rely on a VoIP provider (Voice Over Internet Protocol provider) who relays your phone calls off the Internet as necessary. Your phone is connected directly to the Internet as shown in the diagram below.



Why Is It So Cheap?

ISPs clearly are already making enough money from your Internet service. Whether you use it for web, email, voice or video isn't of a great deal of interest to them. Those ISPs that also offer phone products have already shifted their focus to mobile phones and many are also starting to bundle Internet phones.

To save even more money, look for Naked DSL or Cable Internet plans. These do not have the usual line rental fees for your standard phone, which you won't need with an Internet phone.

How Can I Use It?

- Buy a phone card. Using a phone card, you dial a VoIP provider who routes your call over the Internet. If you use a standard phone, there is no setup required (except perhaps buying the card).

- [Use Skype / MSN](#). Instant messaging software which supports voice or video chat uses similar or identical technology to your other VoIP providers. Once you download the software all you need is a decent headset microphone. The only disadvantage is that it requires your laptop or desktop computer which may be inconvenient at times.
- [Get a router with a plug for your phone](#). Many new routers have VoIP support, which basically means they have a plug for your telephone. You will still need to sign up with a VoIP provider who is responsible for routing your incoming and outgoing calls over the Internet.
- [Get a VoIP adapter](#). Plug the phone into the adapter and then the adapter into your router. This is the same as having a router with VoIP support, but it may save you from buying a new router. You still need a VoIP provider as described above.

VoIP Providers in Australia

The number of VoIP providers in Australia is growing rapidly. Some of the ones we've considered include [Eufonia](#), [Faktortel](#), [Freshtel](#), [Mytel](#) and [Gotalk](#). Many ISPs are now offering this service too, so check your ISP's homepage.

Thanks for reading this Sunburnt Article. Over the next few months we'll be writing about techniques to promote your organisation online, so stay tuned!

About Roger Keays



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