

MTC TECH TALK

For Humans
Not Geeks!

Your resource for the latest technology updates and opportunities for your success.

Are You Ready to Cut The Cord On Your Old Phone System?



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Meeting Tree Computer
📞 (845) 237-2117

VoIP is an overused term that confuses a lot of people. They think it's a phone on your computer, a software application, or a physical phone you plug into your PC. Those all were the early iterations of VoIP. Today, a "VoIP" phone is more of a SERVICE than a physical phone (although physical phones still play into this).

With a VoIP service, you can use any cell phone, your PC, or other devices to make calls and send messages, which gives you the ability to make and receive calls from any location with a reasonable Internet connection.

Sounds like a dream come true, right? Yet many people have a fear of moving to a VoIP for two reasons. The first is call quality and the second is "What if the Internet goes down?"

So, let me address both of those valid concerns and why with the support, these should not cause you to lose sleep at night:

Concern #1: Call Quality

It's true that in the past, VoIP phones have been notorious for garbled, choppy, low-quality

sound and dropped calls. However, the technology that operates these phones has come a long way in the last couple of years, and Internet bandwidth (a pivotal component to call quality) is faster and cheaper. Any sound quality issues you might have on a new VoIP system are primarily due to two problems:

- your bandwidth isn't sufficient, or
- your firewall, router, and computer network (where the phone now resides) are not set up correctly for the phone.

That's it. This is why you really want to work with a phone system vendor that is also an IT firm. Because your phone resides on your computer network, the network must be assessed before installing a phone to ensure it can adequately handle the added bandwidth requirements and ensure the firewall and router are configured properly. Only an IT firm will know how to do this properly.

Concern #2: What if the Internet goes down?

Without a doubt, the Internet WILL go down, but that doesn't mean your phone system has to.

That's because the "brain" of your phone is not hosted in your office. It's hosted in a secure and highly reliable server with multiple backup systems for internet connectivity. Therefore, when your local Internet goes down, you can have the phone automatically set up to do several things, such as:

- Route to a designated cell phone or other location
- Go to an auto-attendant you set up to allow the person to leave a voicemail
- They can leave a voicemail, and that message can get emailed to you.

A good phone system vendor will set this up in advance, so calls are automatically handled the way you want and instantly "failover" without you having to do anything.

Now that we have hopefully taken away (some of) your concerns, maybe you're ready to explore your options. And there are many of them out there. The problem is that most phone systems are basically the same in features and capabilities. Once you start researching you will say lots of marketing claiming that *their* phone system is the best or better than the rest, but all of that is just a sales pitch and should be taken with a grain of salt.

So how DO you compare, and what IS the most important point of differentiation you need to look for?

Here it is: The most important "feature" is not in the phone itself but in the (after-sale) SERVICE – who is setting it up, who will be there to install it, what features will be included in the price, who will configure it and make sure it works, and who you will call when you need help.

Here are 8 questions to ask BEFORE deciding which VoIP phone service is best for your business:

1. Is there a contract?

This is an important question, especially if the phone

system doesn't perform the way you want or if you're not getting the level of support you expect. Many phone system companies will lock you into a long-term contract that you will have to pay hefty fines to get out of, even if the service is terrible and the phone doesn't work as advertised.

2. Does the quote include taxes?
3. What features are included? And which ones cost extra?
4. Can I keep my current phone number? Are there any additional costs involved in keeping my number?
5. Do I have to use specific phones with your service?
6. If my employees need to work from home, how does your phone system accommodate that?
7. Does the system support fax?
8. How do I get help if the phone system isn't working or I can't get it to do what we need it to do?

We all know how exasperating it is to try and get a "customer service" person to help from a big, nameless, faceless corporation. So, we recommend you look for a reputable, local phone system reseller, who will not only set up the phone system for you and customize it for your specific needs, but who will also be there to provide personalized support, training, help over the phone AND in-office support should the need arise.

Someone like us.

Let us look at your current phone system if you're looking to upgrade to VoIP sometime in the near future or are simply curious to learn if you could save money on your phone and Internet bills. We'll answer all your questions and determine which phone system is BEST FOR YOU, based on your specific needs, budget, internet connection and existing network.

Call us whenever you're ready to cut the cord on your old phone system. We can help.

Your Tech Tip of the Month

28 Tech Terms Every Business Owner Should Know.



Have you ever felt frustrated listening to your IT team talk? Felt like you were drowning in their jargon? You're not alone! In fact, we hear business owners complain all the time. One of the reasons why our clients love working with us is that we don't do geek speak. We speak their language and want them to call us out on it when we don't.

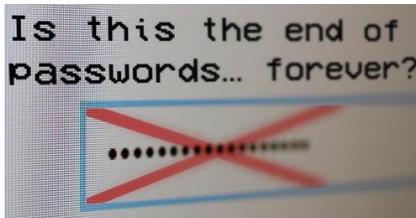
This blog post covers the most common and important IT lingo you might run into as a business owner. Tech terms varying from what is an MSP, to cloud computing, to cybersecurity, to router, to switch, and more.

<https://www.meetingtreecomputer.com/tech-tip-73-28-technology-terms-that-every-business-owner-should-know/>

Are You Excited to Say Goodbye to Passwords ... Forever?

Passwords suck. They're the root cause of 81% of data breaches, but due to the dizzying number of online accounts people have, 65% of us still reuse them.

But guess what? Apple, Google, and Microsoft will roll out no-password login options over the coming year, per the Fast Identity Online (FIDO) Alliance, which sets standards for password-less authentication.



Instead of using a password, you'll sign in with your smartphone or other devices — similar to 2-factor authentication. But this method is called “public key cryptography.”

How it works

Let's say you decide to create an account with your favorite online

retailer, CuteKittySocks.com.

When you register, a key pair is made: a public key shared with CuteKittySocks.com, and a private key that stays on your phone.

Keys are just big-ass connected numbers. For example, a private key could be 2 long prime numbers, and a public key would be what you'd get if you multiplied them.

But you won't see these digits. You log in the same way you unlock your phone (e.g., entering a PIN or scanning your fingerprint). Your phone verifies with CuteKittySocks.com that you have the right key and, meow, you're in!

Okay, but what if...

... someone steals your phone?

They'd still need to complete the challenge, meaning they'd need to know your PIN or have possession of your finger.

Meanwhile, your keys are backed up on the cloud, so you can store

them on multiple devices in the event one is lost or damaged, or transfer them to new ones.

Other benefits:

- FIDO protects against phishing attempts, per Apple.
- You won't even have to use a password during initial sign-up, per The Verge.

However, there are still hurdles. Not everyone has a smartphone or device new enough to adopt password-less logins.

And one survey found that while 85% of respondents wanted to use fewer passwords, 72% believed others would stick with passwords because it's familiar.

Fun fact: A recent survey by digital safety platform Aura found 39% of US pet owners have used their pet's name in a password — 48% of whom have also posted their pet's name online.

Did You Know... You Might Have A RAT?

Malware gets some funny names and acronyms. One you might have heard of is the RAT — which stands for Remote Access Trojan. The RAT can be used for many different purposes, such as taking control of the victim's webcam and microphone, gathering information about the victim, and even stealing personal data.

It's good when your IT partner remote accesses your computer. You can watch what they're doing. But with a RAT, cyber criminals have secret remote access, and you have no idea.

They can watch what you're doing, copy your passwords or launch a ransomware attack.

The simplest way to avoid a RAT is to never download files from sources you don't trust, or open email attachments from strangers. Make sure your business has appropriate cyber security software, use an intrusion detection system, and provide regular training for your team.



Your Remote Workers Aren't Using Computers That Look Like This, Are They???



When did you last check everything was OK with the devices your team are using when they work remotely? That might sound like a strange question. But we recently discovered that 67% of remote workers are using faulty devices to work from. And the reason?

They've likely damaged the device themselves and are too scared to tell you!

Laptops, keyboards, and monitors are most likely to be damaged (in that order). And it's usually because of food or drink spills... though some people blame their partners, children, and even their pets!

We've all watched in horror as a cat rubs itself against a full glass of water next to a laptop...

Using a device that doesn't work properly is a problem, of course. First, it's going to damage your team's productivity. Tasks might take longer or be more difficult to complete. If

they try to fix the problem themselves, they risk causing further damage.

No... a fork isn't a clever way to get bits of cake out of your keyboard...

But the other issue is that of security. In some cases, your people will stop using their damaged company-issued device and use a personal device instead. Which puts your data at risk because their personal devices won't have the same level of protection as your business devices. It also means that if they're connecting to your network, it might not be a safe connection, potentially leaving the door open for cyber criminals. And because your IT partner isn't monitoring personal devices, it's possible they won't spot an intrusion until it's too late.

Our advice? Make it a regular routine to check that everyone's happy with their devices. And have a policy that they won't get in trouble for accidental damage, so long as it's reported immediately.

How Can I Make My Display More Organized?

Consider adding a second monitor. Not only will this allow you to better organize your apps and windows, but it will also give you more workspace.

Can My Phone Be Hacked?

Yes! As well as the risk of phishing and smishing (that's phishing via text message), you also put your data at risk by connecting to public Wi-Fi. Fake apps can be an issue.

How Do I Know If My Teams App Is Up To Date?

Just click on the three dots next to your profile picture and select 'Check for Updates' from the menu. If you're using Windows 11, you'll need to check under settings -> about Teams.

Submit Your Question Here:
mduci@meetingtreecomputer.com



10 Apps You Didn't Know You Had in Microsoft 365

Most people see Microsoft 365 as the place to access Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Teams.

But there's so much more to it than that. There are so many apps bundled in that whatever productivity problem you have in your business right now; the answer could be within 365.

Get our new guide. And we'll tell you about 10 useful Microsoft 365 apps you didn't even know you already had:

<https://www.meetingtreecomputer.com/files/2022/05/MS-365-Productivity-Tools-Guide-.pdf>

This is how you can get in touch with us:

call: 845-237-2117 | email: info@meetingtreecomputer.com
website: www.meetingtreecomputer.com



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