

## Internet telephony

Making telephone calls across the Internet could save companies thousands of pounds. Is the world ready for VoIP?

1 If you received the following advertisement, would you contact the supplier? Give reasons for your answer.

**Reduce your telephone costs through VoIP**

- make free international calls by calling across computer networks
- low cost and efficient way to complement your traditional phone systems
- almost 75% of international calls will be made using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) by 2006

For further information, contact: **FutureFones** (0800 645 321) or e-mail [info@future.fones.com](mailto:info@future.fones.com)

2 Skim the letters and e-mails to *Telenews*, a magazine on telecommunications in the business world. Decide if each writer is positive, negative or neutral towards using the Internet to make telephone calls.

<p><b>(1)</b> Dear sir, As a small business user, I have started to use MSN when calling overseas clients. Although the quality varies, it saves me money. The downside – well, I have to know that whoever I’m calling is actually at their desk with their computer switched on. Another hassle is not being able to speak at the same time – a bit tricky with some of our reps! <b>Brian Holmes, Leith, Scotland.</b></p>	<p><b>(2)</b> Dear Editor, We have just invested in IP phones. I plug my phone into an adaptor which connects through my broadband modem. Long distance calls from Japan were very expensive. Yahoo Broadband bundled VoIP in with its net service so now we talk via the net for a much lower cost than using our old-fashioned phone system. <b>Kikue Imai, Tokyo</b></p>	<p><b>(3)</b> Dear sir, It will be a good while before internet telephony challenges more traditional phone systems. Competition is fierce, and I can still opt to simply use my mobile. The quality and reliability of VoIP is not as good as the telephone service. As far as I’m concerned, there is little or no incentive for people to switch yet. <b>Anthony Jones, Auckland (NZ)</b></p>
<p><b>(4)</b> To: Editor, Telenews I use a company – Skype. It was quite easy to install their software and I can now phone any telephone number in the world over the internet. It’s easy to use, too. I travel a lot so having net access in my hotel room gives me cheaper calls. <b>Jennifer Long, Berlin</b></p>	<p><b>(5)</b> To: Editor, Telenews I am scared that if we do change our telephone system, we will be at risk from attacks by hackers and computer viruses. I am not sure we have enough IT staff to deal with the security issues. <b>Janette West, Toronto</b></p>	<p><b>(6)</b> To: Telenews Many businesses are faced with increasing phone bills. We are a medium-sized business and we now make all our office-to-office phone calls using our IT network. We have saved £10,000 a month! <b>Simon Taylor, London</b></p>

3 Read the letters and e-mails again. List the arguments for and against switching to using VoIP.

4 Create sentences about your own company using the collocations below.

- |                  |                    |                   |                          |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| overseas clients | fierce competition | net access        | make international calls |
| install software | security issues    | telephone service | broadband connection     |

5 Your CEO has called a meeting to discuss ways of reducing the costs of making international calls. He has circulated a list of options. Discuss the options below in small groups in advance of the meeting. Can you add any further ideas? Hold the meeting and select the best solution for the company.

Invest in a new staff phone network	Invest in VoIP phones	Encourage use of Messenger for overseas calls
Equip staff with mobiles	Use a cheap phone service	Staff training to reduce length of calls