

VOIP - All you need to know

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apple

software

tech

voip sip

I've just upgraded to a service called Netspeed Longreach. It's a wireless service offered in Canberra - it requires an antenna to be installed on your roof and provides bandwidth roughly equivalent to ADSL 2 (I'm currently getting about 3.5mbps down/1mbps up) - they claim it can do up to 12mbps. Things that I learned:

1. Make sure that the installation time is in the afternoon (you need line of sight to the tower). The technician couldn't install it on the morning I took off initially due to heavy fog in Canberra.
2. Ensure that calibration occurs on the netspeed end - initially I suffered from regular disconnects (and pathetic bandwidth).

I signed up to the 20gb peak/40gb offpeak per month plan (which should be adequate for my level of data usage). The costs \$69.95 per month. One advantage of getting this service is the ability to switch to using Voice Over IP (VOIP) and remove our current Telstra landline (and the \$30 per month line rental that goes with it). Now, you can purchase a "POTS" (Plain Old Telephone Service) adapter that connects to your existing analog phones (even wireless ones) - this adapter is a SIP client that talks VOIP. It is configured to route calls through your VOIP provider (who provide you with conventional telephony services - such as local phone number and ability to call other land line numbers). I went with a company called Pennytel - their plans are really reasonable - you pay \$5 per year to get a land line number (that your friends and family can call), 8c unlimited time calls within Australia, and 30c per minute calls to Australian mobile phones (with per second billing). They also offer all sorts of deals to get crazy-cheap international call rates. Phone calls to other pennytel customs are free (even if they are overseas!). Other cool things - you have the option of sending voice mail directly to your email address, for \$5 per month you can get faxes sent to your email address, you can have multiple outgoing calls from your number, unlimited sms messages (with your mobile phone as the sender!), an API for integrating pennytel services (including address book management and sms services directly into your applications. You can schedule sms messages to be sent at specific times - oh and no monthly fees - only pay for what you use. I went with a POTS adapter deal they have - for \$97 (including GST and shipping) they are sending me a Linksys adapter and giving \$50 worth of call credits. The only downside is that the adapter is locked into pennytel for the first six months (which, given how solid and cheap their services are, seems like a pretty sweet deal to me). In the meantime I'm using a "softphone" called X-Lite (runs on linux, mac and windows) - it's the one that Pennytel recommends, and looks very well featured for a free softphone. I hit a bug in the OSX version where I couldn't hear the recipients voice - after going through the forums I found the following solution:

Dial ***7469 (SEND) This will bring up the advanced settings window Filter for honor Double click on the honor entry and change the value to 1

Links: Longreach: http://netspeed.com.au/netspeed.cfm?action=p_15 Pennytel:
<http://www.pennytel.com/>

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