What is a VoIP Number: Everything You Need to Know

by Amber Iven - Monday, January 25, 2021

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Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) numbers are becoming increasingly popular. Although common, you might find yourself asking *What is a VoIP number?*

A **VoIP number** is a virtual phone number. VoIP calls take place through an internet connection rather than a phone line. You've more than likely used one yourself without knowing it.

Businesses are leaning more and more toward VoIP services over traditional phone services due to lower costs and portability. With more people working from home, VoIP numbers can easily be used from a computer rather than having to transport and install phone systems.

Individuals use VoIP numbers with certain applications like WhatsApp and Skype to make free or cheap calls, send messages, and even video chat both domestically and internationally.

If you've got more questions, we've got answers. This article covers everything you need to know about VoIP numbers, especially how to find out who owns one since they look just like landline and cell phone numbers.

What is a VoIP Number and How Does it Work?

A VoIP number is formatted the same as any other phone number. It has a three-digit area code, three-digit prefix, and four-digit line number. All phone numbers in the United States are a part of the North American Numbering Plan (NANP).

There are 1.3 billion assignable US phone numbers. There are 10,000 possibilities per prefix and 10 million per area code.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations specify that a single phone provider cannot control all phone number combinations of a local exchange. Therefore, those 10,000 potential numbers are divided into blocks of 1,000 numbers which are then purchased by different carriers.

These numbers could be assigned to landlines, mobile phones, or VoIP. So there's no way to tell the line type of a phone number just by looking at it because they are all formatted the same way. You can use a phone validator to identify the line type of phone numbers you might have in your database.

Additionally, VoIP service providers are subject to similar regulations as traditional telephone service providers. Therefore, if you have a list of numbers for leads in your contact list, you need to know whether those numbers are on the Do Not Call (DNC) list before calling them.

A phone validator identifies whether a number is landline, cell, or VoIP, whether it is active and

reachable, and whether it is listed on the DNC list. This is especially helpful information if you use phone numbers for marketing purposes.

If you're interested in VoIP for yourself, here's what that might look like:

VoIP for Business

VoIP Phone Numbers

About [60% of businesses](#) switch from traditional phone service to VoIP at the end of their contracts. On average, companies that make the switch save about $5,000/year and bring in an additional $480/user due to increased productivity.

While regular numbers are tied to a set phone line or device, VoIP numbers are tied to a specific individual, location, or department. This means that they can be used anywhere and from more than one device.

This is useful if you travel for business, need to receive calls when not in office, or have more than one person on staff who needs access to the same number. In most cases you even get to choose the number.

You might opt for a VoIP phone number with a local area code if you have offices located in specific cities. Phone calls from a local number are more familiar and more readily answered by customers and clients. And if they need to contact you, a local number is more approachable and probably easier to remember.

You could choose a toll-free 1-800 number. This can make your business look more professional and therefore more easily received by customers. This is also a good option if your business isn't specifically tied to a certain geographic area.

And finally, you can choose a vanity number if it's available. You've probably seen these somewhere before. The numbers correlate to letters on the keypad to make the phone number easier to remember. For example, 1-800-CALL-XXX translates to 1-800-225-5XXX.

Many VoIP providers also allow you to port an existing number. So if you already have a business phone number you're using with a traditional phone system, you can continue to use it with the VoIP service instead of with your existing carrier.

VoIP Equipment

In addition to phone number flexibility, you also need a lot less equipment with VoIP. Landline phones require receivers, phone jacks, and sometimes complicated installation. With VoIP, you really only need the resources you probably already have and use for other tasks.

Calls made with VoIP technology use the same broadband internet connection you probably already have. All you need is a device (computer, tablet, phone), and high-speed Internet. You can use the device to

make calls by either connecting it to WiFi or plugging it directly into the ethernet port of your router.

You may or may not have heard of the terms *hard phone* and *softphone*. VoIP service can be used with either and both are commonly used for business. A hard phone looks just like a regular landline phone receiver that plugs into the ethernet port on a router instead of a telephone jack.

A VoIP phone can be used just like a regular phone, so you can purchase a VoIP phone or use a phone you already have. VoIP calls can be made by a regular phone with the help of an adapter.

A softphone allows users to make calls via computer acting in place of an actual telephone. Some VoIP providers offer apps that allow you to make calls from your devices as long as they are connected to the Internet.

Not only does VoIP service require minimum equipment, it also offers a number of features not supported by traditional phone service.

VoIP Features

There are many features offered by VoIP service that help businesses run more efficiently. That's part of the reason why they are becoming increasingly popular.

We already mentioned portability. Since you only need broadband internet and computer or device to use VoIP, it facilitates virtual and remote work. It's no longer necessary to relocate phone system equipment or be tied to its location.

Furthermore, VoIP phone service does more than simply conduct incoming and outgoing calls. Voicemails can be sent to your email, you can set up a voicemail box for multiple extensions, you have the option to play hold music, and there's even an automated attendant that can dictate directory options.

For example, when calling a business, before reaching an actual representative, you might hear an automated voice that provides information and/or directory assistance to route the call to the appropriate department. Information might include location, hours of operation, COVID-19 updates, etc.

VoIP service can assist with record keeping by sending voicemails to a designated email inbox and recording calls. You can also program your phone number to ring on multiple devices before it goes to voicemail. This can allow a team of employees to work together to take calls and help avoid missed calls.

VoIP phones facilitate conference calls better than traditional phones, too. More parties than just two or three can join. This is especially relevant now due to social distancing practices; more meetings are now being conducted over the phone than in person for health and safety purposes.

Last, most VoIP providers offer apps that work for either iOS or Android that allow you to make calls from your personal device using your business number. This helps you conduct business when away from the office while keeping your personal number private.

VoIP for Personal

VoIP numbers are mostly assigned to businesses or for business purposes. A VoIP service rarely issues the user a phone number for personal use. For example, popular apps that work for free using VoIP technology are WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts, and Skype.

You've probably used one or more of these and never received a phone number to use the service. It's likely linked instead to a username. With these apps, it's common also to not be able to make calls to anyone who isn't already added as a contact or friend.

This is good news, though. This allows both parties to consent to the communication before proceeding. You wouldn't want to get random calls to your Skype account like you might to your cell phone number, would you?

What is a VoIP Number Drawback?

One of VoIP's biggest advantages is also a potential disadvantage: it *only* works with a strong internet connection. Call quality and functionality, then, is dependent upon that connection. Without it, you won't be able to make or receive calls.

Also, because of its reliance on broadband connection, shared connection could affect the quality of your calls. For instance, if your business conducts company-wide updates, it could eat up a large portion of the bandwidth therefore slowing the connection for other tasks such as VoIP calls.

To avoid this, you could try to minimize the use of the Internet while conducting calls. Like making sure there are no updates scheduled on the same day as an important meeting, for instance. But it might be a little more difficult to regulate if you take VoIP calls daily and if they aren't always scheduled.

You can, in some cases, set up Quality of Service (QoS) on your router to ensure that voice calls are prioritized over other internet activity. This will make sure you get the best call quality possible.

Similarly, you also need power. This is not the case with landline phones. They'll continue to work in the case of a power outage. They also have the ability to dial out to emergency numbers like 9-1-1. Some VoIP service providers offer this ability. But they are not regulated to offer emergency calls, so not all providers will.

Finally, VoIP numbers open the door to vishing. **Vishing** is a voice or VoIP scam. It is the VoIP version of **phishing**, where users receive fake emails from scammers attempting to elicit personal or confidential information.

What is a VoIP Number Scam?

A VoIP number scam is referred to as vishing. Scammers can get a VoIP number in any area code, like any other user can, but they choose area codes that match the target of the calls. Users are more likely to answer a call from a number or area code that they recognize than from a number they don't.

The scammers conduct their calls over the Internet posing as a trusted company or organization in an attempt to dupe the person called into releasing personal information.

You might also hear this referred to as spoofing. **Spoofing** is when scammers fake caller ID information. VoIP numbers are easy to spoof because users can choose their area code even if it's out of their geographic location.

They can also choose how they show up on caller ID. This leads to impersonation and vishing. Because of this, it's impossible to be sure who a VoIP number belongs to just by the caller ID.

In addition to caller ID, though, the CNAM (or caller name) can also be used to identify VoIP numbers. While caller ID is easily faked, CNAM is not. So there is still a way to find out who owns a VoIP number, you just might need to conduct a VoIP number lookup to figure it out.

What is a VoIP Number Lookup?

Using a [VoIP number lookup tool](#) is the easiest and fastest way to find the owner of a VoIP number. With this tool, you can verify numbers that seem sketchy and avoid being targeted for theft or fraud. You can use this tool to identify the people behind text messages, phone calls from spammers, unknown numbers, businesses, and telemarketers.

But a VoIP number lookup is also useful for business purposes. If you are an individual, attorney, collection agency, or other industry professional and need to obtain the name and address associated with a VoIP line, you can use the [reverse phone number lookup](#) for VoIP or any other line type.

Searchbug's [batch append tool](#) works for VoIP numbers as well. So if you've got a list of phone numbers that are missing associated names, addresses, emails, you can get that information added regardless of the line type.

Conclusion

Don't overcomplicate it when asking yourself *What is a VoIP number?* It's just a regular 10-digit number that's owned by a virtual phone service provider rather than a traditional landline or cell phone carrier.

VoIP technology transfers calls over the internet rather than phone lines or cell towers. You can use it for business with or without an actual hard phone receiver. You can use it from your mobile device to make personal video and conference calls for free or at least cheaply both within and outside of the country.

Be wary, though, of spoofed phone numbers. If you're receiving suspicious calls, you can do a [phone lookup](#) to identify the owner of the number.

And if you need to identify the line type of numbers in your database, find out whether they are active, and determine if they are on the DNC list, you can run them through a [phone validator](#).

Searchbug's phone lookup and phone validator services work the same for VoIP numbers as they do for

landline and cell phone numbers. See? Easy. Check it out [today](#)!

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