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# Cloud Phone Systems

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- What cloud phone systems are and how they can benefit your company
- About the many advantages a cloud phone system offers
- Features that can help both the small business and a call center

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BUSINESS CLOUD COMMUNICATION

**Andrew Moore**





# ***Cloud Phone Systems***

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

***Nextiva Special Edition***

**by Andrew Moore**

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A Wiley Brand

## Cloud Phone Systems For Dummies®, Nextiva Special Edition

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# Introduction

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**C**loud-based phone systems have revolutionized the way people and businesses communicate. A business's telephone system has transformed from a room full of switches and other types of hardware and wires to a service that is purchased and operates on computers located in some far-off data center.

Cloud phone systems (also referred to as cloud phone services) are the logical progression of the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology that has drastically changed what is thought of as a telephone call. The same network you use to transmit movies and videos, social networking data, and email can also be used to transmit telephone calls.

## *About This Book*

This book explains what the cloud is, how phone services are hosted on the cloud, and which features are important to small businesses, virtual workers, medium to large enterprises, and call centers. I explain how cloud phone services can enhance your business and which features you may require to meet your particular needs.

You don't have to read this book from cover-to-cover or even in order. If you need no introduction to the cloud, then you can feel free to dive right into the meat of the book that discusses features of cloud phone systems.

## *How This Book Is Organized*

Each part of this book focuses on different aspects of cloud phone services and how they're used in business, as described in the following sections.

## ***Chapter 1: Introducing Cloud Phone Services***

This chapter introduces you to the basics of cloud phone systems and how they're used in business.

I discuss the cloud technology and VoIP technology that make cloud phone systems possible. You will also get a brief introduction to how cloud phone services can meet business needs.

## ***Chapter 2: Examining the Advantages of Cloud Phone Services***

This chapter discusses the advantages of cloud phone services over on-premise software phone systems that are hosted on a business's network. In particular, Chapter 2 addresses the scalability, reliability, and vast cost savings that cloud phone systems provide.

## ***Chapter 3: Examining Cloud Phone Services for Today's Business Requirements***

This chapter examines the features of cloud phone services that are essential to any type of business from a small business, a business with virtual workers, all the way up to large enterprises.

In this chapter you get a description of the various features of cloud phone services and how a business can use them to meet its needs.

## *Chapter 4: Examining Cloud Phone Services for the Call Center*

This chapter discusses the features of cloud phone services that are available for the call center business. Call centers have very specific requirements such as quality control and customer service that are satisfied by cloud phone services.

## *Chapter 5: Top Ten Reasons to Use Cloud Phone Services*

This chapter lists the top ten benefits of cloud phone services and why you should choose a cloud phone service for your business.

## *Icons Used in This Book*

Throughout this book, you'll find a couple helpful little icons in the margins that alert you to interesting tidbits of information.



Tie a string around your finger. This information is important and bears remembering.



This signifies information that's particularly helpful to know.



# Chapter 1

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# Introducing Cloud Phone Services

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## *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Examining how cloud phone services work
  - ▶ Looking at uses of cloud phone services
  - ▶ Knowing who needs cloud phone services
- 

**P**urchasing a cloud phone system can affect your business for years to come. Careful evaluation of your requirements and vendors is always required. Prior to the widespread adoption of cloud technology, you were required to maintain a staff of IT personnel to install and administer the phone system software as well as maintain the computer networks on which the software runs. Over time, the telephone software becomes outdated as the provider adds new features to the product. In the past, upgrading to new versions of the software usually required another software purchase and installation and possible migration and administrative problems moving from one version to the next.

But today, the cloud has revolutionized telephony software. It's no longer simply a tool to be purchased, installed, and maintained until it no longer meets your needs and you must upgrade to a newer version. Instead, software is a service to which you can subscribe to meet a business needs. Software can now quickly be changed as the business changes.

The cloud has freed phone services from the constraints of space, hardware, and software limitations as well as being tied to a particular hardware and software vendor allowing businesses to sign up and immediately get down to business with their new phone system.

## *How Do Cloud Phone Services Work?*

With cloud phones services, you eliminate the hassle and expense of operating your own telephone system software; and instead, someone else manages all the computers and networks on which this software runs. You still get to use the great features of your telephony software, but someone else maintains the infrastructure.



Consumers of cloud phone services access their services with a web browser, thin client, or mobile device application that typically use the Hypertext Transport Protocol (HTTP); the same protocol that is used to transmit web browser data to and from a website. Most computer users are familiar with using web browsers so it is easy to write applications for accessing a cloud phone system in an environment on which users are already comfortable. Another advantage of the HTTP protocol is that you don't need to configure firewalls or set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to access your phone system because it has the same security as your secure web traffic. See Figure 1-1 for a visual.