



Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

Business Point of View

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[VoIP World Outlook]

- VoIP is permanently here to stay time and technology will offer more and more perfection and innovation for an eventual, total global communication for all the mankind on this earth and beyond.
- Total communication meaning every single individual of this world will be able to communicate with any individual where geographical barriers has no significance what so ever.

[VoIP Belize Outlook]

- The future of VoIP in Belize will entirely depend upon what regulators say about it.
- Blockage, tight regulation or heavy taxation will stifle innovation, hence, the overall development on the vital communication nerve of Belize will be jeopardized.

[India VoIP Case Study]

- Since April 1st. 2002, Indian government is committed to opening Long distance telecom sectors to private players and legalizing IP telephony, VoIP.
- Despite lower international tariffs through VoIP its legalization has increased the governments revenue. The government has also realized a fixed amount from the operators of international VoIP call centers.

[Current VoIP in Belize]

- Smart! and BTL (10-10-199) use VoIP to offer international calls to consumers
- Some companies receive international incoming calls via VoIP.
- Currently, consumers use different international service providers for VoIP (Vonage, Broadvoice, Skype, etc.).
 - Not all consumers in Belize have access to this providers
 - No revenue generated for regulators

[VoIP Disadvantages]

- Necessity of having a reliable broadband connection.
- By extension, VoIP is not readily available to consumers without broadband.
- Quality of voice depends on internet connection, uneven sound, and phone calls can have lot of delay with lot of echo.
- Revenue collection via international service providers (e.g., Vonage) is non existent.

[VoIP Advantages]

- Cost reduction for consumers and business for international calls.
- Internet providers (BTL & other ISP's) will increase sales to accommodate VoIP demand for higher broadband connections.
- Can attract new business to Belize.
- Regulators can collect revenue by allowing VoIP to be offered via a regulated service providers that collect tax on the service

[VoIP Options for Belize]

- Banning VoIP service in Belize.
- Outgoing VoIP call service for consumers.
 - Incoming International calls terminated via existing carriers
- Outgoing & Incoming VoIP call service for consumers.
 - Consumers get an international number to receive incoming calls.

[Business Community Concerns]

- Banning of VoIP in Belize.
- Preferential agreements to offer VoIP service, not allowing a fair market competition, benefiting only specific companies.
- Lack of VoIP service in Belize limits business ability to compete in the international market.
 - Communication is critical to the ability of Belize's business sector to compete globally.
- Risk of loosing opportunities, perception of holding back technology and development.

[Suggestions]

- Allow companies in Belize offer VoIP service to consumers.
- Allow an open, competitive market for VoIP services for the benefit of consumers.
- Regulate service providers so revenue is collected and retained in Belize.