

16 December 2008

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTMAS CALLS NEEDN'T COST THE EARTH THIS CHRISTMAS

- Brits could save over 90%¹ on festive phone calls to friends and family overseas by using their broadband connection.
- Research from BroadbandChoices.co.uk found that only 30%² of UK households with broadband use the internet to make calls.

People with friends and family living abroad this Christmas may find it's not just the cost of gifts that will leave them out of pocket during the festive season.

Last year the British public spent a staggering £3.5 million³ making international calls to wish their friends and relatives overseas a "Merry Christmas," and it is likely to be a similar figure this year. However, recent research from BroadbandChoices.co.uk has revealed that 70% of British households with broadband access are missing out on the chance to save up to 90% on their 'festive phone bill' simply by using the internet to make VoIP calls instead of using their landline.

VoIP (or voice over internet protocol) phone calls are made over your existing broadband connection and not through your regular phone line (or network) like most traditional phone companies such as BT or TalkTalk. By taking ordinary analogue signals and turning them into digital signals, it allows you to ring people using your broadband connection. VoIP services are growing rapidly in popularity because they are easy to set up and all calls to other VoIP users are completely free⁽⁴⁾. In addition, calls made from VoIP to landlines can be cheaper than other service providers. For example, Vonage has unlimited call packages to international numbers starting from £6.99 a month and Skype provides a range of pay as you go and monthly subscription packages which allow unlimited calls to European countries from £3.39 per month and an unlimited international package from £7.99. But remember, the real savings are for VoIP to VoIP calls (which are free) and the 'unlimited' call offers might only makes commercial sense if you make a high volume of international calls.

Michael Phillips, Product Director, BroadbandChoices.co.uk said:

"Christmas is always an expensive time of year and people need to be smarter with their money in these cash-strapped times, so I would urge anyone with relatives and friends living overseas and a broadband connection to seriously consider VoIP.

“VoIP can offer significant savings compared with landline and mobile alternatives particularly when calling internationally and with only 30% of consumers currently making use of their broadband connection in this way, there is the potential for massive savings to be made this Christmas.

“Consumers should choose their VoIP provider carefully because there are dozens of VoIP providers offering overseas calls for next to nothing but call quality, set up costs and connection costs can vary between providers. Use a comparison service like HomephoneChoices.co.uk (<http://www.homephonechoices.co.uk>) to compare the best packages available on the market.”

“It is also worth remembering that landline providers such as TalkTalk offer highly competitive overseas calls and broadband packages, so by switching to TalkTalk, you could cut your phone and broadband bills together. There’s the benefit of landline quality calls and, dependent on your incumbent supplier and specific requirements, this might actually work out cheaper.”

“The key thing is to be smart and compare the options to see how you can make significant international call savings this Christmas.”

-Ends-

(1) – UK to USA: VoIP to VoIP nil call charges with major providers (eg Skype or Vonage), initial set up costs may apply; call charges apply for all other non-VoIP operators and call options

(2) - Independent research undertaken by BroadbandChoices.co.uk and Opinion Matters. Sample base 2,644 UK Adults. Survey Conducted September 2008.

(3) - Figure taken from research by Jajah VoIP services, December 2007

(4) – Initial set up costs to a VoIP service provider may apply

Notes to editors

For further information please contact:

Michael Phillips/ Jon Ingram	ConsumerChoices.co.uk	020 7700 3245
Gug Kyriacou/ Emily Church	Polhill Communications	020 7655 0540/0550

About BroadbandChoices.co.uk: <http://www.BroadbandChoices.co.uk>

BroadbandChoices.co.uk is the second biggest dedicated broadband comparison service in the UK and is one of only two sites to have had its calculator accredited by Ofcom. Unlike other comparison sites, BroadbandChoices.co.uk doesn't just focus on price but total package value, offering consumers impartial advice and access the latest broadband deals to help them make the right choice.

What makes BroadbandChoices.co.uk different?

- Broadband comparison calculator accredited by Ofcom (one of only two accredited UK services)
- Most comprehensive range of broadband consumer guides and advice
- Variety of ways to rank and compare broadband packages according to individual needs
- Detailed package information on over 100 UK broadband packages
- A community of like-minded people where you can read reviews and share your thoughts
- Up-to-date information regarding key industry developments
- Access to practical free, downloadable software tools (*speed tester & download monitor*)