

## The Benefits of moving your corporate phones to VoIP

I ran across some small VoIP and video conferencing programs but most of them did not work right or were too hard to install. Then one day I stumbled across the Asterisk PBX. Asterisk is a full all out open source PBX which runs on the Linux Platform. . I have read so much about Asterisk and was ready to install it. I formatted a hard and loaded Red hat Linux onto the hard drive and then installed Asterisk.

The first thing that I noticed about Asterisk is that is was very hard to basically understand and knowing where to start. Thank God there is a version of Asterisk out there that comes with a GUI called TRIXBOX. Trixbox is basically Asterisk ready to use out of the box. Trixbox makes it easy to setup extensions, voicemail boxes, call conferencing and much more. Trixbox is a good way to learn Linux and Asterisk in general being that there are still times that you must enter the Linux CLI and edit text files for Asterisk.

I myself enjoy using Asterisk without the GUI. Trixbox is a very good resource to learn asterisk basically because it allows you to still edit the text files and use the web GUI at the time. The reason that I prefer to use Asterisk without the GUI is because it is much more flexible and customizable. The GUI basically locks asterisk down if you make major changes it will break the configuration and Asterisk will have to be re-installed

At My office I run Asterisk with a VoIP provider called Voice pulse. Voice pulse is a provider like Vonage except they can provide you with multiple DID's and as many channels as you need. The basic plan will stat at 4 channels but you can add additional channels for \$10 a month. . Each channel is equivalent to a second line. So if you have four channels then you can have four simultaneous calls.

Asterisk can also connect to teleco lines and T1 lines as well. The manufacture of Asterisk 'Digium 'Also creates TDM and T1 cards which can give you access to outside telephone lines. The number one benefit of using asterisk is that it is open source and is

Free! All that is required to run Asterisk is a server that has at least 1 Gig of Ram and a processor that is at least 1 GHZ. Now it can run on hardware that is less then that but I always recommend to my customers of using these specs.

To migrate your office from an existing PBX all that is required is a Server, Asterisk, TDM card if you choose not to use VoIP, Switches that can handle QOS and SIP Phones. SIP Phones start at \$80 and can go up to \$500. My SIP Phone of choice is one produced by AASTRA called the 9133i. The 9133i cost \$118 at Astawerks.com. The 9133i is very easy to configure and can be up and running in minutes. AASTRA has a whole line of great SIP phones that will fit your style and budget. Polycom is has been a leader in conference phones makes great SIP Phones as well.

There are a bunch of resources online where you can read more about asterisk and the accessories to go along with Asterisk. My favorite sites to find information about asterisk are <http://www.voip-info.org> and <http://forums.digium.com>. You will soon wonder why you put up with your existing PBX for so many years.

Finally I want to mention repair cost. When your existing PBX breaks it will run you a couple of hundred dollars to get it back online and running. With asterisk you can have your system back online in just minutes. The way to do that is always keep a clone server that has your Asterisk configuration files and up to date software on hand.

Switching to Asterisk will keep your sane and keep money in your pocket for years to come. Asterisk can be found at <http://www.asterisk.org> and trixbox can be found at <http://www.trixbox.org>.

## About the Author

Doug S. Is the owner of Astawerks and Webmaster of [Astawerks.com](http://Astawerks.com) and [VoIP Directory](http://VoIP Directory)

Source: <http://www.tntarticles.com>