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Lifehacker: Telephones

Phonebooth a Strong Alternative to Google Voice

Lisa Hoover

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Google Voice is a solid option for your personal phone needs, but it might not be professional enough for freelancers and small business owners. Phonebooth is a great alternative that gives you a dedicated phone number, free minutes, and more.



Phonebooth is a web-based phone system that routes your calls to any landline or mobile phone number you choose. Like Google Voice, users receive a free local phone number to give out to customers and clients so you can keep your cell and home number private. Calls made to your Phonebooth number are automatically routed to your private numbers, until you pick up. (Check out the video above with the somewhat grating angry-radio-host narration for more.)

Unlike Google Voice, Phonebooth offers an automated voice tree system so callers can press keypad numbers to reach the desired department (even if the only staff member in

every department is you). It's a handy way to sort your incoming phone calls so you can prioritize them in order of importance.

The free version of Phonebooth also comes with 200 minutes of free inbound calling and a contact widget for your web site. The free service will also transcribe up to 50 voicemails to email or text, along with an audio file so you have a permanent record of the call.

Impressively, all these features are free with Phonebooth's basic package. If you need something with more oomph, \$20 a month will also get you conference calling, detailed call records, 24-hour tech support, and unlimited local and nationwide calling.

How do you handle client calls if you're a freelancer? Do you use a separate number with fancy features, or do you get by with just a cell phone and voice mail? Let us know in the comments.