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Voice as a service (VaaS): What the technology Villains leave out

VaaS, Voice as a Service, UCaas, Unified Communications as a Service, Cloud voice, hosted voice, they are all similar in meaning. They all have several things in common;

1. monthly charge without any capital investment from user
2. include some level of support
3. Allow enduser to outsource voice communications

Part 1: Why is this happening?

1. Everybody is doing it! VaaS piggybacks on Cloud growth overall, Microsoft 365, Amazon web service, Salesforce.com

2. **Staffing struggles**: Organizations don't want to manage or deal with implementation or ongoing management of technology. In house, specialized, well trained expertise is expensive, difficult to keep employed, and hard to replace if they leave.

3. **BYOD**: It's increasingly complex to support multiple devices; mobile phones, softphones, integration with other applications like email.

4. **Security, Security, Security**.

5. **Remote employees:** the increased popularity of home based workers and remote offices requires better remote communications solutions

6. **Fiber connectivity** providing better/faster/cheaper connectivity to host equipment

7. **SiP trunking** and number portability

8. **Financial**: Operating expense vs. Capital expense.

Part 2: What are my options? There are three flavors to consider…

True Cloud Voice
Hybrid Cloud Voice
Private Cloud Voice

True Cloud Voice; shared processor is somewhere in the cloud, limited phone set options and basic phone features,

1. Best for smaller, less complex customers
2. Voice quality is only as good as your internet connection
3. Inexpensive (in basic format)
4. No need for advanced features, call center type shared staff responsibilities
5. Standard feature packages and pricing, no flexibility

Hybrid Cloud Voice: shared processor in the cloud similar to above but also has some hardware at customer site. This option provides the best of both worlds.

1. Good for mid-sized customers who want more traditional connectivity and feel but not a traditional system
2. Features and pricing are customizable
3. Can include call center features, reporting, recording

4. Wide variety of phone sets possible, even digital or analog
5. 3 or 4 digit internal extension dialing
6. Disaster Recovery options available if connectivity to processor is lost
7. E911 options

Private Cloud Voice: dedicated hardware and software located at the customers location or in a data center

1. Best for larger, more complex users who need the ultimate in security, sometimes required for regulatory reasons; healthcare, financial services
2. Features and pricing are customizable
3. Remote gateways can provide local survivability, local trunking connectivity
4. Data center hosting provides the ultimate in infrastructure reliability
5. Can provide connectivity to external paging, music on hold
6. Supports traditional devices like analog and digital phones, fax machines

Part 3: Where are the Technology Villains; what are the hidden risks and costs when considering any one Cloud Voice offering? 11 questions you must be sure to ask before signing up.

1. New Frontier, the market is highly fragmented amongst many players
2. What are the service/outage guarantees? 14 page disclaimer example…

3. Who buys the phone set?
4. Is installation included in the monthly price?
5. Are you dealing with a reseller, or the actual provider?
6. How much long distance is included?   International calling charges?
7. What about wiring?
8. Up and down speed is important!
9. Is support included?   Onsite or remote only?
10.   Are upgrades/new features extra cost when they become available?
11.   Is the support team US based, or are they offshore? What are the legal ramifications of your data being hosted offsite in a foreign country?