

Google Voice ease of use

Is Google Voice easy to use? Dependable? Reliable?

Is it really true that you can get an assigned number in the area code that you pick? And then arrange to forward the telephone calls and/or messages to another number (in a different area code)? And thereby keep track of all incoming calls on the second (or third telephone number)? That means that using Google Voice allows you to set up a remote virtual office with minimal cost — because then all you need to do is get a physical address for mail delivery and mail signing (for items that require proof of delivery).

What are I missing? Thanks for any replies.

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Google Voice is certainly easy, dependable, and reliable. I have it set up for my office number which forwards to my cell phone. My personal number is from a different state, so with Google Voice, I was able to have a local number. Using the app (at least on an Android), I am able to make calls on either my personal or business number, screen business calls (I have it set up so that the caller states their name which plays for me before deciding to answer), and also receive and send texts from the business number. Even more so, it uses a visual voice mail system which also transcribes the voice mail into text, and emails it to you as well. With all of these features, I highly recommend Google Voice.

In addition to having Google Voice as a free service, there are plenty of

low cost virtual offices that will take care of receiving and signing for mail. First starting off, I merely used my home address (a poor decision I quickly learned). Now for a very low monthly fee, I have a very desirable business address that is able to sign for packages and I can also use conference rooms/meetings areas if necessary. Using these strategies, you can basically start off with minimal to zero overhead. Hope this helps!

Best,

Joshua M. Biletsky, California

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Joshua, thanks for your reply. Do I need to get a cell phone with an app for Google Voice (that is, a sophisticated cell phone like a Android, iPhone, GT4, or similar item)? Can I just arrange to have the Google Voice go straight to my landline telephone with messaging service which is both voice and text, I have been told (thru ummessage/AT&T)?

From my questions, it appears that I cannot use a really simple cell phone separate from the Google Voice --- or can I?

Robert Fay, California

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You can use a "dumb" phone or even a landline. You can control Google Voice through a web interface on your computer or through a voice mail system.

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

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Google Voice is pretty easy to use and yes you can get a number in any area code you want. You can also pay to port an existing number and if I recall you can set parameters for when to forward by time. Can forward to any phone you want, landline or cell. I also like the transcript I get by email when people leave a message.

Lisa M. Knauf, Illinois

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I also use Google Voice, but a few caveats based on what people have said here:

1. Call quality is not always excellent. It rarely gets spotty, but a little more frequently than a regular cell number. I've only had one call bad enough that we had to hang up and redial.
2. You cannot always get a phone number in every area code, but their inventory of numbers is constantly changing. When I originally signed up, I could only get a 678 number here in Atlanta, not a 404 like everyone wants an established business to have. I eventually did get a 404 after checking for about a month.
3. I've found voicemail transcriptions to be worthless. Lots of words are incorrect to the point that you cannot make out what the caller was saying without listening to the voicemail.
4. Google is barely supporting Voice anymore. Their blogs and Facebook pages on the service have gone years without an update. Don't expect any level of support from Google if something goes wrong, and don't be surprised if the service is given an end-of-life date at some point.
5. There is no way to set your Android to have a different ring if someone is calling via Google Voice. Instead, you just have to either guess

whether its a personal call or just display the GV number instead of the actual caller and assign it a special ringtone.

I'm generally very pleased with Google Voice. The ability to ring different phones for free is very useful, as I am in and out of my office constantly. Having the callers announce their names is extremely useful if you don't have an answering service. You can also listen in on voicemails being left and record calls. However, the service has its quirks and there is no reason to think these quirks will ever be fixed. So, if you can live with the quirks mentioned above, it's a great fit for you.

Respectfully yours,

Kirby G. Smith, Georgia

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I opened my practice and used, and I am still using, a Google Voice number for my business. It has worked wonderfully.

You don't need a smart phone, but if you have one, the Google Voice app is pretty great as well. I can receive calls, text messages, transcribed (although never very good) voice messages.

Also, you can forward the calls to any number you choose. So, getting one with a familiar area code is a good idea.

Two negatives I have found. The numbers you get are limited and are not from very populated areas. Might be different where you are. Second, is identifying the incoming call. I have not found a way to set it up to where

I know it is a business call while receiving caller ID. It seems as though you can get one or the other, not both. Either the caller ID works, but I don't know if it is a personal call. Or I set it up to where my business phone number shows up in caller ID when an incoming business call comes through, but I have no idea who the call is from.

But for a free service, I think it is a can't miss.

Justin T. Jeppesen, Idaho

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Kirby is right on point.

Rod Alcidonis, Pennsylvania

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I'll be the voice of dissent here -- I use it as my primary number, but I have problems with it. The forwarding is not always accurate, and I often have calls go to voicemail that should have been picked up by my reception service and they swear it never rang there. I've never gotten it to play nice with my iPhone (it was so wonderful on my Android phone) but that may be that I haven't put the time in to it. It's a free service and you get what you pay for. It's good, but not great.

Dineen Wasylik

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I agree. I use it with my iPhone and it's good considering that it's free. But I've had some problems with incoming calls never ringing to my phone and going straight to vm. And often when I try to make a call it fails the first one or two tries.

Betsy Ehlen, Illinois

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Dineen and others, do you suppose a reason why Google Voice works better with Android phones is that Google has a relationship with Android? That relationship is unlike a competition/adversarial relationship with iPhone/Apple. (I am trying to be tactful but lots of companies don't like iPhones because they don't like Apple.)

Roberta Fay

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I had similar problems with my calls not forwarding correctly, and the fix was to ensure that call screening is on. Whether you make callers state their name or not, having call screening checked makes sure that the call is held while the forwarding phones are ringed. If you turn call screening off, then the call is forwarded without ensuring that the call does go through to the phone selected. The end result is that I had times when call screening was turned off and my cell would ring one time, then go to voicemail, or not ring at all and pop up a new voicemail. Never had that happen with screening selected.

I can't speak to iOS issues, as I have an Android phone.

Hope that helps.

Respectfully yours,

Kirby G. Smith

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From an 2011 online article:

".....iOS: Google Voice for iOS is different from Google Voice for Android, because Google Voice is confined to an app in iOS, whereas in Android it's integrated with the entire phone operating system. Once you've installed Google Voice for iOS, tap the app to open it. The app will prompt you to sign in using your Google account....."

[http://www.techhive.com/article/242719/how\\_to\\_use\\_google\\_voice\\_on\\_your\\_iphone\\_or\\_android\\_smartphone.html](http://www.techhive.com/article/242719/how_to_use_google_voice_on_your_iphone_or_android_smartphone.html)

I don't know if this item helps to clarify. Thanks to Kirby and others for the really specific messages. I am trying to decide to get an Android or an iPhone (thru Costco) and the integration with a new Google Voice number is quite appealing -- if it works okay for a legal solo business.

Roberta Fay

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I rarely use the Google Voice app for the iPhone, but I still have all my business calls routed through my Google voice number. I've almost never had any issues with it.

Kevin W. Grierson

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