

Adodo's Concise Glossary of Telecoms

Telecommunications is an industry fraught with complicated terminology and three letter acronyms.

To help with your understanding of some of the more frequently used terms, here is A Dodo's glossary of telecoms.

ADSL – Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line

A broadband technology that delivers very high data transfer speeds over existing telephone lines within the traditional copper wire telephone network. It downloads faster than you can upload them due to there being more bandwidth available on the downstream. It is up to nine times faster than a 56k modem connection. Ideal for residential connections or for businesses not running a server.

Analogue Lines

The original telephone lines. They are still a common option for smaller businesses. However, technology is shifting rapidly towards digital options like ISDN and SIP trunking which prove to be more cost effective.

Auto Attendant

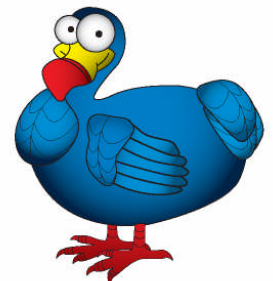
An automated answering system that directs the caller to their destination using prompts. For example, "For the Accounts Department, please press 1".

Bandwidth

A measurement that gives us the capacity to know how much data can be sent through a connection. It is measured either in frequency range eg) 3 kHz, or transmission rate (in bits per second) eg) 63 Kps.

Blackberry

A handheld device which enables wireless access to phone, email, corporate data and other organiser features whilst your away from the office.



Bluetooth

A new technology designed to be embedded in electronic devices in order to provide wireless and seamless connections over short distances of up to 10 metres. Named after a Danish king.

Broadband

Any permanent connection to another network (usually the internet) that has the ability to send and receive large amounts of information in a short period of time.

Call Forwarding

This feature allows incoming calls to be redirected to another destination, such as a mobile phone or a home number.

Centrex

A PBX-like service providing switching at the central office instead of at the customer's premises. Typically, the telephone company owns and manages all the communications equipment and software necessary to implement the Centrex service.

Channel

Is another word used to describe a telephone line, usually used in the context of digital lines.

CLI – Calling Line Identification

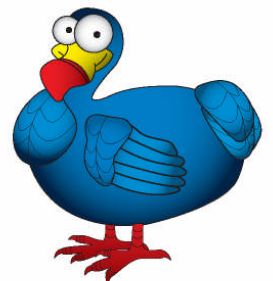
Technology that provides the identity information of the incoming call on the receiver's phone display.

CoS - Class of Service

A means of managing traffic over a network by identifying types of traffic and prioritising certain groups.

DASS - The Digital Access Signalling System

The first incarnation DASS1 is now obsolete and has been replaced by DASS II. This itself will become obsolete over the coming years. DASS II is purely a protocol used to control data flow across the ISDN doing a similar job to the protocols used with modems when sending



the data over the analogue PSTN. It is more highly specified and controlled and operates at higher speeds.

DDI – Direct Dialling Inward or Direct Dial In

Gives the ability to route a call to the desired destination within an organisation directly through the switchboard bypassing the receptionist. The telephone company can allocate a range of numbers associated with the PBX and assign each seven digit number to individuals, faxes or computers.

DECT – Digital Enhanced Cordless Telephony

Are cordless handsets that provide wireless communications within an office, building or site, and they can be fully integrated into the company telephone system.

DSL – Digital Subscriber Line

Once called digital subscriber loop, this is a family of technologies that provide digital data transmission over telephone lines. It can carry both data and voice signals.

Ethernet

One of the oldest Local Area Networks technologies which has been highly successful and is still popular.

Fixed Line

Is a telephone line which travels through a solid medium, either metal wire or optical fibre.

GPRS - General Packet Radio Services

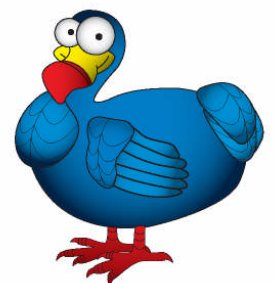
A technology that allows customers to remain connected to the network between calls for the receipt and transmission of data.

IP – Internet Protocol

A standard set of rules that dictate how data is structured and controlled to ensure an accurate transfer of information.

IP PBX – Internet Protocol, Private Branch Exchange

Is a business telephone system designed to deliver voice over a data network.



IP Telephony

Also known as Internet Telephony or Voice over IP (VoIP). Use of Internet Protocol to carry and route two-way voice communications. IP Telephony can support telephone to telephone links through suitable adapters but also voice communications from telephone to IP terminal (such as a PC with sound card) or from IP terminal to IP terminal.

IP/VoIP Gateway

A gateway for existing telephone systems, that converts traditional traffic into IP so that it can be transmitted over a data network. Using an IP gateway can be considered 'migration path' towards IP Telephony. This means that you can gradually transfer to IP Technology thus adding longevity to your existing system.

ISDN – Integrated Services Digital Network

A Digital public network for voice and data communications. The key feature of the ISDN is that it integrates speech and data on the same lines, adding features that were not available in the classic telephone system It is available as ISDN2e, where the lines come in pairs, or as ISDN30e which comes in groups of up to 30 lines, the minimum order being 30.

ISP - Internet Service Provider

Point of access to the Internet for small business and individual users.

LAN – Local Area Network

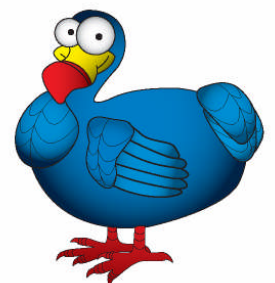
A computer network covering a small physical area such as a school, a group of offices or a home.

Leased Line

Also known as a 'private circuit'. It is ideal for larger business that have mission critical applications to run across the circuit. They may require large bandwidth and high reliability, this option also includes a service level agreement. The leased line provides a direct connection between your premises and another site of choice.

LLU - Local Loop Unbundling

Is where a carrier provides their own broadband service from a local telephone exchange. They are buying the right to run their services over the copper cables and install their equipment in the exchange.



Network

A network is a collection of two or more computers all linked together to share data and resources.

OFTEL - Office of Telecommunications

The UK regulator for the telecommunications industry.

PBX – Private Branch Exchange

Is a telephone exchange that serves a particular business or office, as opposed to one that a common carrier or telephone company operates for many businesses or for the general public. Sometimes referred to as PABX private automatic branch exchange or EPABX electronic private automatic branch exchange.

PSTN - Public Switched Telephone Network

The public switched telephone network which was traditionally analogue, but now is almost entirely digital. On a PSTN line two way conversations travel down a telephone line in a straight line, rather like traffic flowing up and down a motorway in opposite directions.

Portal

A gateway or entry point to the Internet incorporating significant function.

QoS – Quality of Service

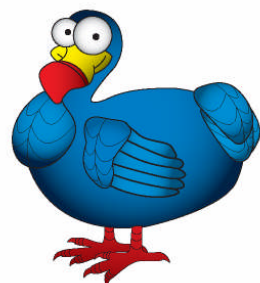
This is used to provide acceptable voice quality across IP networks.

SDSL – Symmetric Digital Subscriber Line

Broadband technology that delivers very high data transfer speeds over existing telephone lines. The main difference between ADSL and SDSL is that SDSL has the same upstream data rate as downstream (symmetrical), whereas ADSL always has smaller upstream bandwidth (asymmetrical). However, unlike ADSL, it can't co-exist with a conventional voice service on the same pair as it takes over the entire bandwidth.

SIP Trunking

These lines allow a pure IP connection to be formed between enterprises and telephone carriers and make it possible for businesses to make and receive calls over broadband circuits or other data connections.



Smartphone

A mobile phone offering advanced capabilities beyond a typical mobile phone, often with PC-like functionality.

Soft PBX – Soft Phone

A software application providing server-based telephony, for example, a soft phone on your laptop allows you to make calls from it.

Trunk

Another way of saying 'line' or 'channel'.

Unified Messaging

Provides a centralised mailbox for all email, fax and voice messages. Through this system, messages can be viewed, replied to, saved and deleted in this one inbox.

Voicemail

Callers are enabled to leave messages on personalised mailboxes. Messages can also be retrieved remotely.

VoIP – Voice over Internet Protocol

A protocol that is optimised for the transmission of voice through the Internet or other packet switched networks, and is now considered part of the backbone of every day telecommunications.

VPN – Virtual Private Network

A Virtual Private Network is a private network built on Internet Protocol (IP) that helps extend the reach of your company's network either nationally or globally to connect remote sites or users together.

WAN – Wide Area Network

A computer network that covers a larger area rather than being limited to one building or site.

