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Wednesday November 7, 2007

Initiate a VOIP Call Via SMS With Raketu
Categories: [VOIP Technology](#)
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Have you ever been on the road and had a burning need to call your mate overseas? Actually, as someone who lived in the UK for two years, I know the feeling.

OK, so that's a bit of a unique case. But what about a businessman on the road? As more and more of us interact with overseas contacts, a cheap means of calling overseas strikes me as a handy [backup](#). Enter Raketu's SMS service, which will be announced this coming Monday.

Raketu's pitch is that you might not own or have access to a smartphone with an embedded Skype application or other VoIP application. By texting a message to the local SMS number, Raketu will connect the two numbers (which can be the [mobile](#) you're holding or a nearby landline.)

Like Jajah or a host of other [VoIP](#) services, the company also offers PC-to-PC, or PC-to-phone calling. It's the SMS service that makes it (almost) unique, however; to my knowledge, only [Click4Me](#) offers something similar, although I've never tried it. [Raketu's phone-to-phone rates](#) are about a penny per minute for a mobile-to-landline call, or about ten cents per minute when placing calls between mobiles, according to company founder and chief executive Greg Parker.

You'll also have to pay for the initial text message, but that text is handled by your existing carrier, using their SMS rates. Although Raketu provides calling service to 150 countries, the local SMS text numbers needed to set up the calls are only found in about 50 countries. (I'd expect Raketu to provide a list of those numbers when the service goes live on Monday.)

Users prepay a certain amount into the system, and then pull money from that pool to pay for calls. The company also has promotions that can provide up to 1,200 free minutes each month for three months calling over 40 countries.

Obviously, this makes the most sense for people placing frequent calls overseas from the road, and *that* limits it to a certain select few. However, it also makes sense for those consumers who have ditched their landlines, and don't mind paying a bit to place a call overseas. I'd imagine that if this proves to be successful, you'll see Raketu's competitors adding this to their own product portfolios.

(Random aside: Um, is that a cartoon character *in lingerie* I see on the Flash bar ("Be entertained") on the site?!)

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