

# It's time to switch on cus

**Z**en Internet research has revealed that almost one in four (24%) businesses are unaware that a range of Wholesale Line Rental (WLR) voice and broadband products supported by the copper-based network will stop being sold completely in two years' time.

That's pretty scary, because when the old network is withdrawn it will affect some essential functions such as card payment machines, security alarms and elevator phone lines.

Even more alarming is that many businesses could soon find themselves bound to communication agreements which are set to become obsolete as the 2023 stop-sell date is reached.

- Over one in 10 (13%) businesses say that the next possible point of contract renewal/termination with their traditional telephone third party supplier is more than three years away.
- Almost one in 10 (8%) say that they have no plans to renew or terminate.
- When it comes to traditional telephony equipment, almost one in six (15%) of businesses say that the next possible point of contract renewal/termination is more than three years away and more than one in ten (11%) say that there is no plan to renew/terminate.

These facts all point to one thing - a massive opportunity for trusted comms providers to upgrade their customers to new cloud based digital products and services, especially with almost half (45%) of other organisations surveyed saying they would consider a cloud-based solution to integrate their communication channels.

As Paul Stobart, CEO at Zen stressed: "Bespoke cloud-based unified solutions can provide scalability, accessibility and efficiency and having a trusted partner is key to supporting this journey."

Zen's research has struck a chord with Openreach, which is planning to ramp up its educational programmes. James Lilley, Director Managed Customer Migrations, Openreach, said: "We relate to the findings from this research. We'll soon be ready to announce a new business specific communications campaign to help provide the level of detail required for businesses to get ready and prepare for the copper stop-sell."

The message to resellers from contributors to this month's Kaleidoscope is clear. Why wait to start getting 'upgrade now' messages over to your client base?



MARK JOHNSON  
9 GROUP

"Openreach's full fibre rollout and the government's wider ambitions are widely known, and yet a sense of hesitancy remains. The national stop-sell in September 2023 is imminent and Openreach is motivated to gather pace. As more partners reach the point where they are ready to take a more proactive approach, those who stand still risk being left behind. The impact of copper on other services is potentially under the radar. Partners need clarity around where responsibility for continuity of such services lies, along with support to communicate with their customers. As part of our commitment to partners, we've been supporting proactive customer conversations about the switch-off since 2019. We provide support and advice as well as tried and tested customer communications, which aim to address the challenges and opportunities. A supportive, reassuring approach which aims to inform and educate has been received well, both by our partners and their customers."



GRAHAM WILKINSON  
BEYOND

"There are a large number of businesses who have buried their heads in the sand. However, they are starting to wake up to the realisation, as we accelerate at a huge pace into new ways of working, technology and market forces. Weirdly, the pandemic has aided the shift as people have been forced into new ways of working and communicating, that are effective. Legacy ISDNs in offices have not been used and businesses are realising now that they don't need them. This has helped in changing attitudes to moving to complete IP-based infrastructures. From Beyond's perspective we continue to bang the drum of Openreach ultimately turning off legacy platforms. The 'switch-off' message isn't enough on its own, it's more around how you position and bundle new technology. At Beyond we offer solutions like SOGEA bundled with our Simplified Hosted UC voice licences, providing flexible, future-proofed solutions."



JOHN IGOE  
CITY FIBRE

"Thanks to ongoing government discussions and media coverage, businesses are increasingly aware of the limitations of copper and the urgent need to upgrade our UK infrastructure. However as connectivity providers it is our, and our partners' responsibility, to be the educators and help businesses forward plan by introducing them to the most effective alternative options available. With regards to Openreach's stop-sell plans, our aim is to keep our partners informed with regular updates on product development and the replacement options available as they evolve. We want British businesses to be able see how they can revolutionise their digital future and so it is vitally important to ensure awareness. By delivering future proof full fibre connectivity we can be confident our infrastructure is fit for purpose for the long term, supporting the UK economy and ensuring businesses get reliable high-speed connectivity to not only offices, but other critical working environments."



Distributor



Dealer



Reseller

# Customers to big switch off



VICKI RISHBETH  
FOCUS GROUP

"I think the majority of British businesses are largely unaware of the impending changes to the network. It seems that not all CP's are yet engaged with the process, let alone their respective customers. We have a long way to go to communicate, disseminate the available scenarios and assist businesses through the move to an all-IP Future. We are communicating with our customers and channel as much as possible, however we're looking forward to more certainty with some of the solutions the business community uses regularly, such as release of all the new data suite of products, SLA's befitting business customers and new products from our carriers to offer simple dial tone at a competitive price. This will help us to clearly communicate upcoming changes while creating solutions to provide a compelling reason to embark on their upgrade journey."



ROAN PRATT  
NETWORK TELECOM

"With the impending changes to the UK telecoms network on the horizon, ensuring our customers are prepared is a priority. At Network Telecom, we are finding a mixed approach from our customers with some eager to accelerate their move to the cloud and others holding off due to a 'wait and see' attitude. However, as BT increases its portfolio with SOGEA and its FTTP footprint this will only help to accelerate change across our customers before copper is turned off. We will continue to advise customers what the impending switch off will mean for their business and the benefits it will offer in order to create a buzz about these impending changes. As part of Enreach, we are working on some exciting enhancements including FMC, EPOS and CCAAS. This will allow us to work with new and existing customers to provide the best possible solutions both for now and the future."



IAIN SINNOTT  
VANILLA IP

"I think there are several hindering factors involved in slowing a move away from the copper-based services. From SME customers this includes time poverty, 'every day' pressures that makes the date in 2023 seem too far away to consider. Also, there is the question of up-to-date knowledge; pre-March 2023, many businesses were unaware of the substantial benefits of cloud communications tools. Resellers themselves have played a role in the lack of interest in system evolution. With incomes reliant on old revenue streams and capex finance models, many have neither the working capital nor the will to drive that change early. We enable an easy blend of Capex and Opex options across our portfolio helping partners move toward a full SaaS proposition, creating strong underlying revenues and steady revenue growth. With a newly informed community of buyers, I expect to see the pace of change accelerate as Covid uncertainties subside."



PAUL TAYLOR  
VOICEFLEX

"It's fantastic that our great nation will have a 100% IP network by the end of 2025, with a full set of stop-sell exchanges by 2023. There are 28 million WLR lines in place, so it's a once in a lifetime opportunity for the channel to changeout existing circuits, as a high percentage will be PSTN lines used for data connectivity. What an opportunity to re-engage with your customers! ISDN customers don't have an option, they have to change. With change comes an opportunity to sell additional products, be it telephony, security, alarm systems etc. I'm expecting a land grab as after fibre there's nothing else - no new technologies are lurking in the background. If you decide to 'wait and see', it could all be over before you know it. Make hay while the sun shines, with WLR cut off day close, the sun will not be shining for long."



BARRY WARD  
WAVENET

"A lack of belief that services will be switched off by 2025 has resulted in a 'wait and see' attitude from many businesses. For some time, this approach has prevailed, but many organisations are now in need of review. FTTP rollout is relatively limited with an ongoing debate between migrating FTTC to SoGEA, then to FTTP, versus waiting for FTTP. There is also margin to be lost in channel on legacy PSTN-based solutions when switching customers to FTTP too early. For channel partners, it is a large undertaking that requires investment, financially and with human resources. Best practice requires project teams to map transitions and move connections to an all-IP service. Clear communication around the benefits of the move is vital, but there is still confusion in the market. It is essential that organisations, like Wavenet, continue to support end-users and channel partners, to help map migrations and ease confusion."



JASON KILVERT  
INCOM-CNS

"We have been engaging with our customers on this subject since Openreach's withdrawal plans were announced however, having seen an impressive uptake for ISDN replacement products such as SIP in the early days, the pandemic has led to a change in priorities for businesses and contributed to a slower move to replacement services. The current 'wait and see' attitude appears to extend to our partners in the industry and, while we continue to talk to our customers about what the future looks like, we have been frustrated with the distinct lack of products forthcoming to tick all the boxes in replacing legacy services. As trusted advisor to our customers, with access to a breadth of connectivity providers, we need to source reliable, replacement products to hang our hat on, which includes training our team on new services, pricing, and processes. We need our partners to step up to the plate."

## Stronger Together

What ever your size or requirements, we have a partner model to suit you.



Partner with  
us today!

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