

intercity

# ISDN IS SWITCHING OFF

Here's what your business needs to know





## What is ISDN?

**ISDN, or the Integrated Services Digital Network, was launched within the UK in 1986 and quickly became fundamental to the nation's telephony network, with over 2 million businesses still utilising this technology as part of their communications today.**

It is a circuit switched network which transmits voice and data via the traditional circuits from PSTN, otherwise known as the Public Switched Telephone Network.

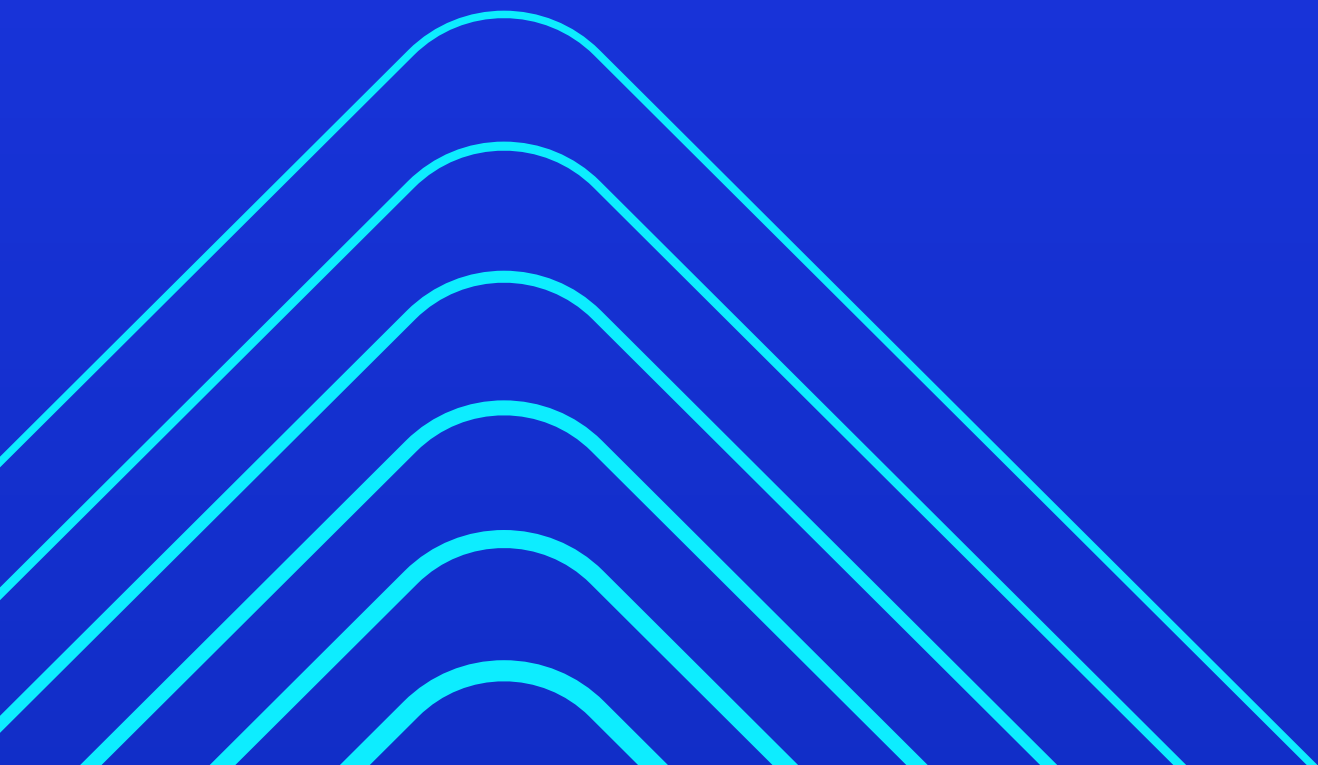
Moving into the 90s, what became known as the National ISDN 1, or N1-2, was brought in to further improve the current lines available and overall network performance.

The transition for use of ISDN was simplified and quickened through major manufacturing involvement from large corporations such as Motorola.

Jumping straight to today in 2023, although there was once a successful and highly sought-after go-to telephony service with notable benefits, the future of communications is rapidly developing, leaving ISDN behind.



**Time is running out for ISDN as BT look to switch off all connected systems using this technology by the year 2025. This guide will break down everything you need to know, so that your business can be prepared for when that time arrives.**



# WHY IS ISDN BEING SWITCHED OFF?



Technology is continuing to progress at a considerable pace, with requirements for faster and more effective communications at the forefront of most business operations. This means that the way we communicate must evolve alongside these advancements. Following its 30+ years in action, the time has come for emerging technology to supersede ISDN & PSTN legacy solutions.

Simply put, traditional copper lines cannot keep up with far superior alternatives such as VOIP. The change is fundamental to the continuity of the nation's telephony network. Key reliance on communication has never been more paramount than now. Business performance, productivity, and true work from anywhere, hybrid working models rely on efficient, fast, flexible, reliable, and cost effective telephony solutions. Not only that,

 **1985**

British Telecom trialled its first Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN)

 **1997**

ISDN gradually replaced by ISDN 2e to comply with the latest European ISDN standard

 **1991**

ISDN 2 is launched. This included faster transmission times and low cost video links

 **2003**

The first major players introduce VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) to the market

but with the PSTN being in general use since the late 1800s, the time for change is upon us. It's estimated that the current IP phone market is worth £21 billion globally and is expected to be worth £63.5 billion by 2027, as companies continue to switch from legacy systems.

Not only will businesses prosper from enhanced technology, but BT look to directly benefit from the switch-off also. They now have opportunity to focus their support and resources on just one platform (fibre optic technology to deliver superfast broadband) which will be utilised for decades to come. It is no wonder BT are ready to make that move forward.

 **2017**

BT announce plans to switch off ISDN in 2025

 **2020**

The phase out begins, customers can no longer purchase new ISDN connections

 **2018**

BT begins workshops with service providers that responded to initial consultations

 **2023**

No new line installations, line conversions or ISDN channels

 **2025**

ISDN is switched off permanently





## WHAT EQUIPMENT DOES THE ISDN SWITCH OFF IMPACT?

The death of the analogue line in 2025 means that businesses will have to move all their services into the digital age. But apart from your unloved desk phone, what other equipment around the office will be impacted by this change?



## THE HUMBLE FAX MACHINE

Incredibly, there are still over 43 million fax machines in operation all over the world and 17 billion faxes are transmitted every year. So, whilst some of us may not have sent a fax since the turn of the millennium, in certain sectors such as manufacturing and health care, faxing is seen as more secure, easier to use and better suited to existing work habits than computer-based messaging.

So, with analogue technology soon to be confined to the annals of history, does that mean you will have to bin the facsimile machine?

In a nutshell, no. Giving up on faxing could limit your capability to connect to millions of other businesses across the planet. One alternative to keeping your fax without an analogue line, could be to switch to VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). VoIP technology will allow you to connect a legacy fax machine to the internet and submit and receive faxes through digital technology.

Alternatively, you could chuck the fax machine in the skip and update to cloud faxing, which works by transmitting fax documents through online software and digital data protocols.







# LIFT LINES AND ALARM SYSTEMS

It's January 6th 2026, and you all roll into work, bleary eyed after the Christmas holidays, only to find your premises have been broken into. But why didn't the alarm go off? And how did the burglars get past the door entry system? And why isn't there any CCTV footage?

The answer is simple. All this technology was controlled by the now defunct analogue line, that Derek in IT said he would get round to looking at before the switch off in 2025. Unfortunately, you all attended Derek's leaving party in October and Derek obviously hadn't made plans to move your business into the digital age.

You decide to head upstairs in the lift to ring the police. You then get stuck in the lift and yes, the alarm system is connected to an analogue line, so that's another thing that isn't working. Oh, and by the time you escape the lift and use the landline to ring the police, that's not working either.

This is obviously a nightmare scenario. Don't rely on a Derek to bring your business into the digital age, talk to one of our ISDN switch off experts today about what options are available to you.





## WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

Now we have shared a brief overview of the what and the why, it is beneficial to understand what comes next and the options available as of now to ensure a quicker and more efficient switch over.

This brings us to SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), otherwise known as IP Telephony, which are examples of cloudbased solutions. The adoption of IP Telephony allows for communication using a mobile phone or computer to make calls if there is an active internet connection available. This not only enables a simplified installation project due to no physical lines being used in the call process but ultimately a reduction in costs also as a result.

In fact, no matter where in the world you are, or where a call is being made to, the possibility and accessibility in doing so, will always be within reach and at a higher quality transmission and speed than the previous, more traditional systems, such as ISDN could ever have allowed for.

Also, with most business infrastructures and operations already firmly online, it is a no brainer as to why this newly formed solution is a modern must have for all continued communications.



## HOW DO I MAKE THE SWITCH OVER EASIER?

Yes. It's true. The actions being taken with the ISDN and PSTN networks are not yet scheduled to take place for another few years.

However, that does not mean your business has to maintain a connection to those legacy solutions until that time arrives or draws closer.

With SIP and VoIP solutions being readily available at your fingertips, there is more than enough reason to take full advantage and supercharge your business performance sooner rather than later.

No matter where you find yourself on your ISDN switch-off journey- whether you just want to save money on your current fixed lines, or if you are ready to take that leap to unified, cloud communications, we're here to give you the advice and support you need to enable better business.



## Benefits of switching to SIP or VoIP



**Save money – On average you could save up to 50% on your line rental and 25% on calls.**



**Enjoy higher quality transmission and speeds than ISDN services**



**You're in control. Add lines, take them away, – it's up to you. Choose how and where you want calls delivered and make changes instantly.**



**VoIP handles emergencies with ease. You get business continuity enabled and you can reroute calls to backup sites in seconds.**



## Conclusion



**"Our advice is don't wait until 2025 or even 2024. The current climate has already shown businesses the benefits of flexible and collaborative working underpinned by IP telephony. Understanding your estate and moving to IP telephony, supported by the right connectivity will give your business the agility required for the future."**

Kelly Green, Product Manager

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