

Making Everything Easier!™

Google Voice

FOR

DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Set up and use Google Voice
- Integrate it with Google services like Gmail and Google Chat
- Combine Google Voice with your existing phone and Web systems
- Realize impressive cost savings

Bud E. Smith
Chris Dannen



Google Voice™ For Dummies®

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Google Voice™ For Dummies®

**by Bud E. Smith &
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Bud Smith grew up on the Left Coast and moved north — he couldn't go much further west — to Silicon Valley 20 years ago to work for a technology startup. He's an experienced technology author, computer magazine editor, product manager, and marketer. He's been writing about online communications since the early days of 14.4Kbps modems — about 1 percent of typical broadband speed today. His phones and other portable devices have included early Palms and BlackBerrys and worked for Apple when it introduced Newton, a distant ancestor of the iPhone he carries today. His books include *Creating Web Pages For Dummies*, now in its 9th Edition, and *Marketing Online For Dummies*. He holds a Master of Science degree in Information Systems from the London School of Economics.

Chris Dannen grew up and works on the Right Coast and is currently based in New York City. His technology interests include a focus on telecommunications, and Chris has used and written about iPhones, BlackBerry phones, Android phones, and many others. Chris writes for a variety of technology magazines and Web sites, including Fast Company. He was an early adopter of GrandCentral, predecessor to Google Voice, using it to fend off — uh, that is, better communicate with — the legions of PR people that magazine editors are in

constant communication with. He's written two books about iPhone application development. He is completing a Master of Arts degree in journalism from Harvard University.

Dedication

We would like to dedicate this book to our families, who have been endlessly supportive as we spent equally endless hours intently studying (okay, playing with) the latest and greatest phone technology in our quest to better understand Google Voice and its place in the future of telecommunications.

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We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at <http://dummies.custhelp.com>. For other comments, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

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Foreword

A few years ago, we looked at all the phones in our own lives and discovered things had become quite complicated: one for the office, another at home, a cell phone (maybe even two) for taking calls on the run. We had to remember a different number for each device, and so did our friends, family, and co-workers. We missed important calls whenever we stepped away from the desk or forgot a cell phone at home, and checking voicemail on all those phones proved more trouble than it was worth. We rarely listened to voice messages, and when we did, it was only to delete them.

The idea for GrandCentral, which later became Google Voice, was born out of our own frustrations. We worked on web-based technologies before and quickly realized the Internet could help everyone gain more control over their phones and communications. We eventually organized the product around a single phone number that links all of your phones together, a single voicemail box that is accessible from any of those phones with all of your messages saved online, and many features we all wished for, like voicemail transcription and a phone spam filter to keep unwanted callers away.

Today, the Google Voice team remains focused on making your communications better and we will continue developing new features that give you more control over how you communicate. We hope you enjoy exploring

Google Voice through this book and thank you for using the service

Craig Walker and Vincent Paquet

Google Voice

Introduction

Google Voice may be one of those rare trifectas — a product that's truly new, truly important, and immediately recognized as such from the time it first appears. Why might this be?

Google Voice combines three of the most important trends of our time: the increasing power of our computers; the even faster-growing power of cell phones and smartphones; and the meteoric rise of Google to become the world's leading Internet innovator.

Google Voice brings all this energy together in a product that's free, easy to use, and available to anyone in the United States. If you have at least one phone and at least occasional access to a computer, then you can find immediate benefit in Google Voice. People with multiple phones and a lot of contacts — journalists, bloggers, salespeople, and savvy PR pros — are among the first to adopt it. Hundreds of thousands more are expected to follow.

Google Voice is simply a layer on top of the tools you already use, yet allows these tools to do much more than they did before. It's still unknown, of course, just how much of a difference it will make over time, but its status as one of the most important new offerings of recent years has been acclaimed by newspapers, magazines, and the technorati alike.

But what about you, the new Google Voice user? Although it's easy to get some superficial use out of Google Voice, it's a deep product. To really take advantage of it means changing some existing habits and reorganizing the way

you communicate. It also requires you to learn a few other new tools, such as dialer apps that run on smartphones. Luckily, all this work is likely to pay off handsomely. Effort you put into Google Voice today will pay off for a long time to come.

So enjoy the time you spend learning your way around Google Voice, and use this book to guide your experimentation with it. Google Voice is exciting and will change the world, at least a bit. You should have some fun as you learn to use it to its utmost capabilities.

About This Book

It's *about* one of the most exciting products around — and it's *about* 360 pages long.

What do you find in these pages? The best and most in-depth guide to using Google Voice around. You learn how to thoroughly integrate Google Voice into your daily life and work. We show you how to use Google Voice along with the cell phones, land line phones, and computer(s) you already have and use every day, and how to shop for new gear that works best with your new Google Voice communication style.

We go beyond Google Voice itself to show you how it can best be used in organizations large and small, and how to get the most out of dialers that run on the leading smartphones from Apple, RIM BlackBerry, and manufacturers who use Google's Android mobile operating system. We even discuss etiquette for the best use of Google Voice in your work and personal life.

Foolish Assumptions

We've done our best to cram this book with information and insights, but almost no one will read it all the way through save our long-suffering editors. That's because you are likely to discover some of the functionality of Google Voice on your own or from friends and colleagues before, during and after the time you spend reading this book.

You're likely to need the chapter on one smartphone, but not all the chapters on all the smartphones we discuss. You may decide that you need to start with the chapter on Google Voice etiquette or that you never need it, and could have written a better guide to the topic yourself.

What do you need to use this book? A smartphone is enough, or a phone of any type and access to a computer. The more phones you're responsible for — whether that's just your own phones or also those of friends, family or coworkers — the more widely you'll use what you learn here. Even a single phone, though, can be used better if you know how to get the most out of Google Voice in managing it.

You do need to be an experienced user of the Web and an experienced user of your phone so you can change settings. If you're not super Web-savvy, don't worry — we talk you through everything. This book can save you time and prevent common mistakes, but Google Voice isn't rocket science.



The figures in this book show up-to-date Windows screen shots for a consistent appearance. Being Web-

based, though, the instructions and steps in this book work equally well for Windows, the Macintosh, a netbook, or a smartphone — almost any device that can run a Web browser.

Conventions Used in This Book

The *conventions* in this book are standard ways of communicating specific types of information, such as instructions and steps. (One example of a convention is the use of italics for newly introduced words that are then defined — as with the word “conventions” in the first sentence of this paragraph.)

Here are the conventions for this book:

New terms are printed in *italics*, and then defined shortly afterward.

Information used in specific ways is formatted in a specific typeface. In this book, one of the most common kinds of information displayed this way is Web addresses; that is, text you enter into the address bar of a Web browser to visit a specific Web site or Web page. Web addresses appear in special text like this: `www.dummies.com`.

Google Voice is fast-paced and evolving, as are the Web sites that support it and describe it, and the products, such as dialers, that work with it. By the time you read this book, some of the product names and URLs listed in it may have changed. For updates, please visit our blog at www.gvdaily.com.

Representative browser versions appear among the figures.

Related, brief pieces of information are displayed in bulleted lists, such as the bulleted list that you're reading right now.

Numbered lists are used for instructions that you must follow in a particular sequence. This book has many sequential steps that tell you just how to perform the different tasks that, when taken together, can make you a successful Web author.

How This Book Is Organized

We began this book very soon after Google Voice was announced, before it was available to anyone outside Google and a few ladies and gentlemen of the press and early adopters. We finished it just a few months later, which is breakneck speed for a major book project about such a new product. During that time some things in the real world and our understanding of how to get the most out of Google Voice both evolved.

So things changed along the way. And we began, and will continue to maintain, a blog at www.gvDaily.com to help describe and help you with any changes that occur after this book goes to print.

Part I: Setting up Google Voice

If you set up a mousetrap correctly, you end up minus a bit of cheese and plus a trapped mouse. It's the same with Google Voice. If you make a strong beginning with it, you get results without a lot of additional effort. We devote Part I to showing you all the things that people who don't have this book may trip over in setting up Google Voice.

Part II: Maximizing Your Voice

Google Voice has four layers of settings — for your phones, for individual callers, for groups of callers and for all callers as a whole. It can be controlled live from a phone before or during a call, from any Web-enabled phone, from a smartphone and from a Web browser. Getting the most out of all these settings takes some doing, but don't be intimidated. We make it easy for you to get the most out of Google Voice, and to save time and money as you do so.

Part III: Maximizing Your Handset

If you have a cell phone, no matter what kind it is, Google Voice will help you get the most out of it. We plumb the mysteries of the Google Voice Mobile site and Google Voice dialer apps for iPhone, Android phones, and BlackBerry phones to help you become a savvy, capable power user in very little time.

Part IV: Playing Well with Others

Google Voice works well with Gmail, other Google Apps offerings and even a third party tool, Gizmo5. It also “plays well” in small business and the enterprise. We show you how to get all these players operating as a team.

Part V: The Part of Tens

You only get one chance to make a first impression, and that’s as true in your use of Google Voice as it is anywhere else in life. Our Part of Tens chapters show you how to use the emerging etiquette for Google Voice to make it a positive for all those you come into contact with.

Icons Used in This Book



Marks information that you need to keep in mind as you work.



Points to things you may want to know but don’t necessarily need to know. You can skip these and read the text, skip the text and read these, or go ahead and read both.



Flags specific information that may not fit in a step or description but that helps you create better Web pages.



Points out anything that may cause a problem.



Using Google Voice can save you a great deal of time. This icon highlights information that will help you save time.



Using Google Voice can also save you a great deal of money. This icon highlights information that will help you save money.

Part I

Setting Up Google Voice



In this part . . .

Google Voice changes and improves the way your phones work for you. Here we show you how to get it set up right the first time, including how to save time and money with Google Voice.

Chapter 1

A Day in Your Google Voice Life

In This Chapter

Discovering what Google Voice can do

Using Google Voice in the morning

Getting through the workday with Google Voice

Using Google Voice at home

Understanding the bottom line

Google Voice is a marvelous mashup — all the power and control we associate with computers at their best, combined with the warmth, spontaneity, and flexibility of talking to other people. Although you need to spend some time figuring out how to get the most out of Google Voice, the service can ultimately simplify your life.

Google Voice is not only powerful and capable in its own right, but it works alongside other Google services. You can get a lot out of it for personal use, and take it even further in a business context.

Google Voice is not to be confused with Google's Voice Search, which allows you to search the Internet by speaking words out loud; nor with Google Talk, a service for using a computer directly for text messaging and computer-to-computer voice conversations. Both of these are valuable services, but they don't overlap with Google

Voice, which allows you to fuse all your telephone lines into one central, Web-accessible hub.

Google Voice helps you manage real live phones, with all the voice quality and convenience that only a telephone has, along with voicemail for all of them. Unlike Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) services, Google Voice lets you add the convenience of the Web while preserving the voice quality and convenience that only a telephone can offer.

And Google Voice saves you time, money, and hassle. Anyone can improve their life with Google Voice — while businesses can do even more, by cutting costs and adding services in a way that can not only reduce expenses, but really move the needle on what a business can offer customers.

Discovering Google Voice

Google Voice reduces the cost of calls, making national calls free and international ones much cheaper — perhaps a tenth the cost of a direct-dialed cell phone call. And Google Voice notifies you of voicemail messages and allows you to record phone calls, so that you can manage conversations as well as the phones themselves.

Here's how it works: Google Voice gives you a single, virtual phone number, from almost any area code in the U.S. that you'd like. That number, in turn, can ring any or all of your other phone lines — your work phone, cell phone, and so on, meaning that you can be reached with just one number.