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# Mobile VoIP Meets Cheap International Calls

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Raketu's latest offering won't replace your SIM card, but it does come pretty close.

Jim Higdon on February 12, 2008

How much competition can the mobile VoIP sector stand? Apparently, plenty. Are there so many people who want to make cheap international calls on their cell phones that room has been made for yet another company to compete with [fring](#), [Mobivox](#) and [EQO Communications Inc.](#)? (Not to mention [iSkoot](#), [Nimbuzz](#), [Tello](#), the [Gizmo Project](#) and so on.) [Raketu](#) thinks so. Over a few weeks in January 2008, Raketu rolled out two mobile VoIP clients, one for [BlackBerry devices](#) and another for [Windows Mobile-based smartphones](#). Raketu released its [iPhone client](#) a month earlier, in December 2007.

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### How It Works

Raketu (which means "rocket" in Czech) is different from its competition because it's not only a mobile VoIP company but a synthesis of [voice](#), [media](#) and [social networking](#). With its phone system, like other mobile VoIP companies, Raketu offers a combination of free and cheap international [calling rates](#). Unlike its competition, Raketu offers [four calling methods](#), varying from free to cheap. In addition to mobile VoIP calling, Raketu also offers [Skype-like](#) PC-to-PC calling, PC-to-phone calling and phone-to-phone calls established by text messaging. While Raketu uses P2P (peer-to-peer) technology to transmit these international calls, the company is quick to point out that its P2P technology is a more direct method than that of Skype and other services use that rely on supernodes — intermediate computers between the call's source and destination — to carry the load. Raketu states firmly: [No supernodes!](#) This makes calling from Raketu faster and more [secure](#).

While its mobile offerings are new, Raketu has been [generating buzz](#) since 2006, when it rolled out its first VoIP offering. “It shows definite promise,” the VoIP Service Blog wrote in its November 2006 review. “Never have I seen this many features wrapped up in an IM client.” [PC Magazine](#) noted that Raketu's service even worked over a dial-up connection, as well as broadband, and wrote that “although far from perfect right now, it offers plenty and shows a lot of promise.”

With the release of Raketu's mobile VoIP platforms in January 2008, Tim Hillenbrand at Mobility Site wanted to know, “[Can Raketu replace a SIM card?](#)” His conclusion: not really. Not yet, anyway. “The bottom line is that it is a wee bit clumsy to use. However, it's certainly worth a try, if you have the patience ... ” he wrote.

Soon, Raketu plans to issue incoming phone numbers, which will allow users to receive calls and text messages, similar to the SkypeIn service. “As it is now,” Hillenbrand wrote, “the only way people can respond to your SMS [Short Message Service] is to your cell phone, which defeats the whole point of an alternative Internet system and the use of a Pocket PC without a phone connection.”

### **Raketu's Future**

Before the day comes when Raketu can successfully bypass a phone's SIM card using the phone's data connection, there is [one obstacle standing in its way](#), according to Silicon Alley Insider: the major mobile carriers.

“The carriers won't like it, and will bounce you from their networks if they find out. Most mobile data contracts expressly prohibit using their data network to stream audio, which is exactly what you're doing,” Silicon Alley Insider wrote.

This could all change with [Verizon Wireless' open-access plans](#), but Silicon Alley Insider noted that the company intends to charge by users' bandwidth use, so “free” phone calls won't be cheap.

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