



Enterprise IP Solutions

Samsung OfficeServ 7100



Enex Test lab undertook an independent review of the OS7100 on behalf of Zdnet, an online technology website that delivers tech news, and resources for IT hardware, software, networking and services.

Samsung is better known for its consumer electronics and mobile phones, despite the company having a presence in the Australian communications market for almost 20 years. The OfficeServ 7100 is Samsung Communications' latest addition to its series of "convergence telecommunications solutions" products.

Find out why it's one of the best VoIP products for Australian small businesses in our exclusive local review.

How We Tested

Our aim, with all VoIP reviews, is to examine a variety of features common to telephony systems including the following:

- Voice quality:** We give a subjective rating of voice reception quality.
- Ease of use:** We consider the intuitiveness of phone operation and configuration.
- Configuration options:** Is a system/phone configurable from the handset only or is there a PC based interface?
- Ergonomics:** A phone should be comfortable to hold and operate.
- Interoperability:** Can the server operate with other brands of SIP handset?
- Documentation:** Clarity of writing style and diagrams. Samsung supplied us not only with a OfficeServ 7100 server, but a variety of handsets to demonstrate its wide ranging capacities.



What's inside

The 7100 is a rack-mount device and is designed for customisation -- both initially and later as your requirements grow. The basic cabinet supports three slots, one of which carries the main CPU. The CPU is a 375MHz Mindspeed M82511G processor running a Linux OS.

Software and messages are stored on a MMC card which allows for service staff to quickly replace or update in a moment if required. Lesser adjustments can be made via a Web interface, either via LAN or the Internet. The other slots may carry a variety of ports depending on the needs of the individual business with support for four to 32 stations depending on the type of device attached.

The 7100 supports multiple telephony standards. In addition to IP telephony, standard PSTN telephony is supported in both digital and analog forms and there is also the capacity to handle e-mail and soft phone connections and wireless services.

Third party SIP devices should co-operate with the Samsung system, but it would be advisable to avoid this given the fact that the SIP "standard" is not as standard as we would all like at this stage and the full range of services on the OfficeServ 7100 may not be available on third party devices. Support for PoE (power over Ethernet) allows for reduced cable-clutter and confusion in the office. *continued over...*

Overview

Editors' rating: 9/10

The good:

- Design and functions consistent across product range
- Largely automated handset configuration
- Excellent voice quality
- Competitive pricing

The bad:

- Memory slot protector would not have gone astray
- Occasional static when using cordless handsets
- Does not support DECT handsets

The bottomline:

An impressive set-up well worth the consideration for any small office looking to bring their telephony systems into the twenty-first century.



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continued story "What's inside"

The handsets supplied for testing were both stylish and functional. Display angles can be set to suit the user and buttons are well spaced and show great consistency between phone models.

The voice quality of all the phones supplied was excellent. Not surprisingly, we did find a little static if we took the wireless models (the SMT-W5100) to a separate concrete-lined room. The wireless phones link to the server via an access point supporting both 802.11a and 802.11 b/g wireless networking. Overall the handset performance was very pleasing.

We also looked at the ITP-5100V Video phone, which operates at a resolution of 640 x 480 pixels. While we tested the video facilities only over a local connection we found the image quality was good. The nature of the LCD display meant that horizontal lines were apparent in the image, however these were not detrimental to the user experience. Naturally you might suffer from low video refresh rates if you use this system over a relatively slow Internet connection. Video calls can also be made via the Softphone application supplied with the **OfficeServ 7100**.

Call handling options are too many to list, suffice to say many standard features are supported. Beyond transfers and voice messaging there is the capacity to send e-mail notifications of calls and other significant events as well as voice recordings (WAV files) of messages received or notes that the user wishes to record for their own benefit when they have hands and paper available.

Flexible user groups allow calls, messages and configuration options to be directed to particular sets of telephones. These groups may overlap and can be assigned to one of nine administrative levels each with its own password protection. Customer service managers will appreciate the ability track which calls have gone unanswered by a given department and individuals can also use a PC-based interface to track their personal call history.



Verdict

It's hard to find fault with the **OfficeServ 7100**. It works well, can be readily expanded or modified and it even looks good (for a VoIP server). With many VoIP systems, all too often it is a struggle to seek configuration items in deep, poorly labelled menu trees. Worse is that some systems limit handset-based configuration to a one-line LCD display.

The Samsung system provides three modes of configuration: handset menu, a Web interface (slow, but offers great flexibility in terms of remote management) and an application interface accessible via a locally connected PC. Each of these options was very well implemented. As a result, the **OfficeServ 7100** is worthy of a ZDNet Australia Editors' Choice award.

The majority of configuration would actually be handled by a third party Samsung reseller, after consultation with the client to ascertain specific needs. Typically an ongoing service agreement would provide for additional tweaking of the system as required. Samsung offer a basic 12 month warranty, but resellers may choose to offer extensions.

The single cabinet implementation available for our review would be well suited to a small business or branch office. Samsung have designed their system with expansion in mind, so the **OfficeServ** can grow with your business.



Editors' rating: 9/10

check out the online review of the **OfficeServ7100** by visiting www.zdnet.com.au using the search keyword "**OfficeServ**"