

These notes initially were the 2nd part of a presentation for the KWVoIP group. They outline my experiences purchasing, installing, and optimizing Ooma.

Here's a nicely done review of Ooma:

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2386299,00.asp>

Here's a story about Ooma and a company (ANSYS, Inc) with a local office and a connection to UW:

<http://resource.ansys.com/staticassets/ANSYS/staticassets/resourcelibrary/article/Refresh-Your-Memory-Article-AA-V8-I3.pdf>

My New install of Ooma

I purchased the Ooma Telo online for \$110 + HST and free shipping. It arrived within a week. Setup is well documented, unambiguous, and easy. All I needed was a phone for temporary use.

Roughly twice a week in June, I received email messages introducing me to the Ooma services available to me. Since Premier Service is free for the 1st 2 months, one can try them out.

The Basic vs Premier comparison chart:

<http://support.ooma.com/home/feature-comparison-ooma-premier-basic>

Here's a picture of my temporary setup:



<https://goo.gl/photos/Kw5Cdrut4hYbYugD7>

After deciding to just port my main Rogers number, and not my Rogers fax number too, I started the process from my My Ooma Dashboard. I signed up for 1 year of Premier Service (\$120) with a gift to port 1 number for free (\$40 value). The 1 year was added on after my free trial period! While completing the entries to port my number, I got a pop-up that said I could get a special \$20 off deal for 1 year of Premier including the free port. Grrrr.

Fortunately, my order did not work. So I called the Ooma Support 800 number. We ended up having the Support person enter my port request manually – a confirming email to come later in the day. I asked if the Support person could fix my invoice for Premier. Sure, she said, can I put \$20 in your credit card account? Yup. Done. Yippee.

I ordered my number port on June 30th. Rogers called me around July 12th. They offered about \$100 per month off my bill for 2 years if I did not drop my Rogers Home Phone. I declined and they said call back if you change your mind. The number port was completed on July 14th.

(Truthfully, I doubt I properly understood the offer. The conversation was confusing. I suspect my bill might have dropped \$50/month at most.)

Switching the Telo from my temporary number to my ported number required a series of reboots that lasted about 8 minutes – I suspect some firmware updates were loaded at the same time. I plugged in my Panasonic phone system and I did a couple of successful test calls. Then I tested answering my home phone using a mobile app on my Nexus 5. It worked. Mobile features are a topic for another time.

I was nervous about changing over my fax setup, but it could not have been easier. I followed Ooma's instructions. Thankfully, I had a Rogers' quality splitter on hand to use. A test fax went through without a hitch. But there is more about faxing later.



<https://goo.gl/photos/DUPa6FrthLqWKqQK6>



<https://goo.gl/photos/y1b7cB1bntGoosL1A>

After 2 weeks of use there are a few things I have discovered. Call quality is a difficult issue to deal with. Some of my calls have been horrible, and some have been marginally bothersome. Sometimes there are inbound problems and sometimes there are outbound issues. Ooma's FAQs, Ooma's Forum posts, Rogers Forum posts, and other Google search results can confuse more than help a 1st time VoIP user.

But, I did discover there are settings on the Telo. To access them you run an Ethernet cable from a laptop to the HOME port on the Telo, and then browse to setup.ooma.com. This is necessary if you want to play with the QoS settings on the Telo. (I have a Rogers Hitron Gateway. I see no way to deal with QoS settings on the Gateway, should that be needed.)

I tried high value QoS settings on the Telo, but reset them to 500 (very close to default) up and zero down. I moved my Panasonic phone system base station to be 6' from the Telo. I disabled DECT setting on the Telo. The last few calls have been better.

I was not happy yet. Too often I had to repeat "Hello" before my caller knew I had answered my phone. And, occasionally I would get a noisy connection. Stubborn guy that I am, I didn't want Ooma Support to help me – I wanted to learn through doing my own "support".

Then I met Kiwi Ssenyonjo. He was able to explain some things about VoIP to me and to suggest how I could make the best of my setup. (Bob Jonkman helped a lot too.)

I told Kiwi that my Rogers Home Phone worked well so why was Ooma not as good? He suggested that My Rogers Gateway was “tuned” to make Rogers Home Phone work its best, but now the Ooma Telo was compromised. The solution was to bridge the Rogers Gateway (make it a modem only), add a router, and plug the Telo into the router. SUCCESS!!

As time passed, I sensed the VoIP service was improving on its own. Kiwi and Bob – at another meeting - assured me that it was entirely possible.

On October 5th my Ooma had its biggest test so far. The phone call was to an 800 number at a Quebec location. We used the speaker phone the whole time and the call lasted about 2 hours. For more the half the time, a support person in Quebec was remotely logged into the problem PC in my office. One of my business partners was doing most of the talking at this end, and he was talking in a way that can give VoIP fits – talking over and talking too fast. Nevertheless, the 2 hour call went flawlessly.

My final task was to make sure fax messages could be received automatically. I could receive a fax manually and I could send a fax, but my Samsung SCX-4826 Multifunction Printer would not automatically pick up a fax call no matter what I tried. Since incoming fax service is only marginally important for me, I decided to go with a work around.

I signed up with <http://www.faxaway.com/> for internet fax service. I pay only US\$1 per month to maintain an account. There is no additional fee for incoming fax pages. A fax sent to my assigned fax number is emailed to me as a PDF attachment. (The area code is for Seattle but I don't care.)

A table of costs and savings for this project is on the next page. Your costs and savings will vary. Nevertheless, the switch to a VoIP service like Ooma will pay for itself in 3 to 7 months.

Brian's Cost Comparisons

	First 14 Months	Following 12 Months
Ooma Telo (ATA hardware)	\$110.96	\$0.00
Basic Fee	\$63.00	\$54.00
Optional Premium Fee	\$112.86	\$135.46
Router Changes	\$101.69	\$0.00
Internet Service Changes	\$0.00	\$0.00
Phone Changes	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Cost	\$388.51	\$189.46
Rogers Home Phone	\$827.40	\$709.20
Brian's Savings	\$438.89	\$519.74
Brian's Savings Per Month	\$36.57	\$43.31

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