

## Centralized Phone Systems

Jill Corrente, Assistant to the Director of Library Operations at Arapahoe Library District, while researching centralizing the phone system for some of its branches posted the following inquiries and responses to LITA:

**Does anyone have any experience with a centralized phone system used to answer and direct calls for several branches (with the possibility of the operation rolling over to a different branch at different times of day)?**

**We'd like to hear about vendors and/or what different procedures are out there for handling this type of situation.**

Comments	Respondents
<p>I have a networked PBX for a Main Library and two branches. I started acquiring the pieces as we expanded in 1999, so VoIP was not reliable at that point. Would seriously consider if I were in the market today.</p> <p>We use Direct Inward Dialing trunks (you may look at T1) that all come to the Main Library. They also service the branches, as do the outbound trunks. Voice mail is at the main location; we have three automated attendants and assign a DID to each one so that people think that each library has it's own phone system. We have day and night menus and they switchover on a schedule. I can change what options send calls to what extension. We also have 4-digit dialing between branches, which is nice. Only caution would be what exchanges your locations are in and would you force people to make a toll call to a local branch?</p> <p>I understand that voice activated attendants are now much more affordable than they used to be so callers can simply say "renew" or "homework" to direct their calls rather than pressing numbers.</p> <p>I've literally started to write a book about phone</p>	<p>Larry P. Neal, Assistant Director Clinton-Macomb Public Library 40900 Romeo Plank Road Clinton Township, MI 48038-2955 (586) 226-5011 (586) 226-5008 - fax <a href="mailto:larry@cmpl.org">larry@cmpl.org</a></p>

<p>systems in libraries; haven't touched much since 2002, but would be happy to share if you are interested. It doesn't cover much about VoIP or centralized configurations</p>	
<p>We have 8 locations sharing a phone system, specifically the Inter-Tel Axxess. We reach our 7 remote locations via voice-over-IP (VoIP). We use a point-to-point T1 line to each location for all data and phone connections. At our main location we share a T1 (PRI), which gives us 23 outgoing voice lines. We have a total of 112 internal extensions, both digital and analog.</p> <p>Our phone tree is pretty extensive. We have direct dial lines for each branch, but during their closed hours callers are offered the option to contact various departments at Main (when open).</p> <p>If you have a very savvy tech staff, the open-source project Asterisk is a very cost effective way of providing remote dial-tone, call routing, and voicemail (see: <a href="http://www.asterisk.org/">http://www.asterisk.org/</a>).</p>	<p>Bill Ott IS Manager Grand Rapids Public Library "Bill Ott" &lt;bott@grpl.org&gt;</p>