

Mwalimu's Corner

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Raketu - the next big thing?

I've been reading in a few VoIP journals about how Raketu may give VoIP (particularly Skype) a run for it's money. I decided to take a look at the product myself.

Summary

Raketu is a peer-to-peer service that provides voice calling, messaging and other services over the Internet. Unlike other P2P software, **Raketu does not install** additional spyware, malware, or adware.

Unlike other P2P software, **Raketu does not use** supernodes in their architecture ([Raketu's documentation on their architecture](#))

Raketu is looking to be an all-in-one media center. It either provides or is planning on providing the following services:

- Podcasts
- Video player
- SMS text messaging
- Social networking services
- Free setup of your own radio show (best way I can explain it is YouTube for radio)

System Requirements

Microsoft Windows 98/ME/2000/XP - Note that RakOut **does not work** for Windows 98. Raketu *may* work on Windows 2003, but there is nothing in their

About

A member of the [My Mwalimu](#) community, this blog will discuss topics that are relevant to computer programming and information technology.

About Me



Name: Jennifer R. Lewis

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I'm Jennifer Lewis, and I am the founder of My Mwalimu, a site that provides interactive, free computer programming tutorials for computer programming students and teachers to use to supplement their education. The blog *Mwalimu's Corner* talks about technology, while the blog *My (Gluten-Free) Way of Life* contains product reviews and recipes for people following the gluten-free diet.

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platform.

Install file is 3.4MB; Installed product is 11.5MB

If you have an Intel-based Mac, you can use Raketu if you are running the BOOTCAMP software on your machine

Raketu is not supported on Linux, although according to their site, they are working on a Linux version of the software

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Things I Liked



No supernodes and no additional software installed on your machine.

Interfaces will all the major IMs. One of the things that I liked about this product is it integrated my IMs into Raketu, so I don't need to run all my IMs while I'm running Raketu. It lets me know whether I received any messages from my other IMs.

Free calls to anywhere in the US and up to 40 countries *with limitations*. You need to have at least \$0.01 in your account.

The "all-in-one" package is a good concept. I, personally, don't like to have a ton of applications open when I'm trying to do my work. Keeping everything in an "all in one" package makes it easy for me.

I can send SMS text messages without having my phone with me. However, I do have issues with how it works (see the "needs improvement" section).

Good tutorial movies to explain how to use the software.

Things that Need Improvement

According to their [published rates](#), they charge you approximately \$0.61/minute when you make a call to a *toll-free* number. I didn't see anything in their support pages nor do I know of any FCC regulations to explain why they charge for toll-free calls.

I had trouble playing podcasts using Raketu. Raketu reads the RSS file and lists the podcasts from the service to which I subscribed, but when I try to play the podcasts, it doesn't play because the URL is malformed (it drops the address). In Raketu's defense, this could be a "bug" in the RSS feed they received from StationCaster (the provider) rather than their parser. I reported this to Raketu support.

The SMS interface needs work. Before you start using the SMS messaging services, you have to set up the address in your contact list. You can't just enter the destination

when you send a message like you can when you are using rakOut.

Additional Notes

Raketu is not intended to replace your existing phone service. You can only make **outbound** calls, and you cannot make emergency calls (ex: calling 911 in the US) in this system.

If the destination number (the number your calling to) has caller ID, the number that appears in the caller ID is 555-555-5555.

When you are talking on the telephone using rakOut, there is about a 1-2 second communication delay

For their phone service, when you pre-pay, the balance expires after 180 days.

I'm really excited about their "free radio show" service.

Analysis

Raketu has a lot of potential. The "all in one" process integration concept and the P2P architecture that they use is very good.

However, I think that they tried to release too much too soon, and it shows in the product. The interface is clunky and inconsistent (some functions stay within Raketu, while other functions open your web browser or your e-mail software), and some of the additional features that are there, like the picture viewer, are too basic to be considered as a valuable substitute for other packages.

Do I think that it's a viable competitor to VoIP? Not yet, because you can only make outgoing calls, but you cannot receive incoming calls. Do I think that it's a good product? This is a brand-new product, and there are going to be some growing pains, but I do think that it is a good product overall, and it does have the potential to be amazing.

Labels: [tech review](#)

posted by Jennifer at [10:39 AM](#)

3 Comments:

Jennifer: Wow! This is the best analysis of Raketu that I've read anywhere! They have their job cut out for them because it looks like other people are going to compete for the same customers. I wish them