

## Brazil's Very Poor Get Free Internet Phone and Learn About Free Software

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The Brazilian government is promising that before year's end residents from 2,100 towns across the country should be able to make phone calls for free using the Internet.

According to the Communications Ministry's program, people without a phone at home can just enjoy the Electronic Government Program - Citizen's Assistance Service (Gesac).

Brazil has already 3.200 hot spots to encourage what the government calls "digital inclusion" in cities where most of the population is poor, but the use of the Internet for phone calls is not universally available yet.

The Internet stations not only offer free access to the Net but also computer training and lessons on how to use free software. Each station will have a telephone number, so people will be able to place and receive phone calls.

Eliomar Medeiros, the Communications Ministry's digital inclusion director, explains that the government is taking care first of regions where the access to communication is more difficult.

"We have many spots that are in locations without phone and where roads are a problem. We are connecting these people to the virtual world and also to the more physical world of being able to talk, and receive a call from a relative".

In order to use the Internet for voice broadcasting, a technology known as VoIP, it's necessary that the Gesac's steering committee in the each location install a program available in the site [www.idbrasil.gov.br](http://www.idbrasil.gov.br). All the equipment needed are earphone and microphone.

Through Gesac, people will also be able to create and to have their pages hosted in the Internet. According to Medeiros, some communities already have their own electronic newspapers to publish local news.

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