Calls over IP set to double in five years

THE number of calls over IP is set to more than double within five years, says new research from Point Topic. And it says that the global growth of fixed-line VoIP services grew by 12.6 per cent last year.

Consumer and business use of VoIP rose 21 per cent in the year to June 2010. However, the company warned there were so many variables that forecasts could easily be off by a wide margin.

An increasing number of subscribers have no fixed line telephone service at all, relying instead on mobiles.

Skype, which was bought by Microsoft last month, has around 150 million regular users. At the end of 2010 it had around 9 million paying users each generating around US$8 a month on average.

Microsoft plans to integrate Skype into a wide range of products including the Windows phone and Outlook.

Meanwhile, usage via traditional lines has fallen by eight per cent over the past year.

Online retailer to hire 900 for new call centre

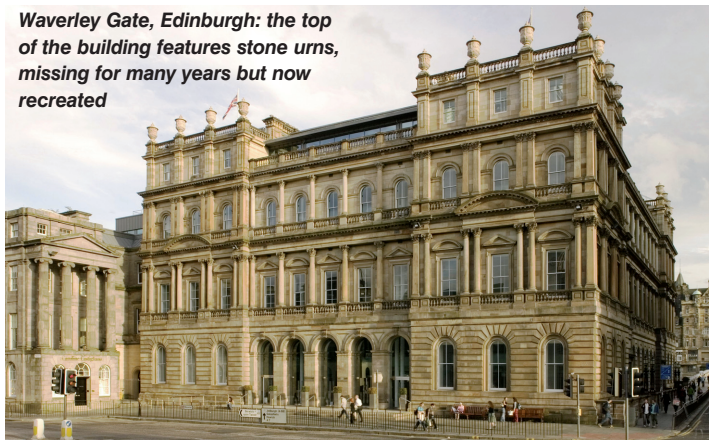
AMAZON has signed a 10-year lease for 58,000 sq ft in Waverley Gate, Edinburgh, for a customer service centre. It will join organisations such as Microsoft and the NHS which already have offices there.

Waverley Gate, on the corner of North Bridge and Waterloo Place, is a former GPO building with a listed façade. The foundation stone was laid in October 1861 by Prince Albert and the building opened in May 1866.

In a project said to have cost £100m, a new glass building with atrium and rooftop garden was created within the shell of the original building

Due to open in August, the new centre will handle customer queries, online and by phone, including technical support for the Kindle and MP3.

Amazon said that during the next five years it would be hiring 900 staff in permanent and temporary roles. It will use a £1.8 million grant from Scottish Enterprise to refurbish the office and fund staff training programmes



Waverley Gate, Edinburgh: the top of the building features stone urns, missing for many years but now recreated

Amazon's vice president of European operations and customer service, Allan Lyall, said: "As our business continues to grow and we move into new areas like grocery, sports and clothing, our customer services support needs to expand as well.

"Edinburgh is an outstanding location, providing us with access to a highly-skilled workforce who will help us to achieve the high standards of customer service that shoppers at Amazon.co.uk expect."

In addition, Amazon is opening a 1m sq ft depot in Dunfermline before the end of the year which will have 750 staff, plus 1,500 temporary roles during the Christmas period.

Mr Lyall said: "Scotland has been home to a number of Amazon fulfilment centres for many years and we are delighted to be expanding our operations within the country with a new customer service centre and fulfilment facility."

Amazon already has a software development centre in Waverley Gate.