Merry Christmas

FROM ALL OF US AT OCS

REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Email Privacy

Is there any government agency that isn't spying on us? If some of the email you send may contain sensitive content, or if you think it's simply nobody else's business, one way to increase your email security is with "PGP" (Pretty Good Privacy).

PGP was developed in the early 1990s. The cryptography standard has been strengthened regularly, and it is very effective.

Basically, correspondents can use a PGP utility with their email programs to encrypt and decrypt selected messages. In the old days, this would have been like writing a message in secret code that only the recipient could read using their decoding kit.

PGP uses virtually infinite possible code combinations for encryption, and there's a large world-wide community who support PGP to help ensure that it remains secure. To date, even global governments have resorted to legal action to disclose passwords (private keys) because PGP encryption cannot be broken with known technology.

In the case of the medical community and HIPAA privacy standards, upscale solutions are available that require intermediate secure websites. This works well and it meets legal compliance standards, but it adds cost, overhead, and it's overkill for basic correspondence between friends, family and even small businesses who simply want to protect their correspondence from outside eavesdropping.

PGP utilities are available for most popular email programs. Both senders and recipients must install PGP, but it's free from gpg4win.org (Windows) or gpgtools.org (Mac). Symantec (symantec.com) also supports PGP, but it's designed more for company networks and it's not free. For more information, search online for "PGP email security" or contact us at feedback@porterville.com.

Do you really need Java?

In our February 2013 newsletter we discussed the growing problems related to viruses introduced through Java running in Internet browsers, as hackers become increasingly adept at exploiting the venerable utility.

Computer repair technicians at OCS report that their single greatest workload is cleaning viruses from infected comput-

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Do you really need Java?
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ers. And, the single most common source of the infections they discover is through Java exploits.

In most cases the version of Java installed on infected computers is outdated, or the security level is set too low, or both.

Some websites require Java for specific applications, but the majority do not. The best solutions are to (a) keep Java up to date on your computer; (b) set the Java security level to High or Maximum; and (c) disable Java from running automatically. All of this can be done in Windows Control Panel > Java.

If disabled, any website that requires Java will prompt you to enable it. If you need to use that website and choose to enable Java temporarily, you can disable it again after you're finished.

If after some time you determine that none of the websites you use require Java, you can remove it entirely from your computer in Windows Control Panel > Programs > Uninstall.

Using Windows 8.1

Last month we described the experience of upgrading from Windows 8 to 8.1. Was it worth it?

Definitely! With only a few configuration tweaks* you can completely bypass the Metro tiles that were unavoidable in Windows 8 by booting straight to the familiar Desktop.

Then, touching the Windows key – or clicking the Windows icon, where the Start button used to be – can be set to display a graphic array of all applications, sorted with your most commonly used on top. Touch the Windows key again (or Esc) to toggle back to the Desktop.

Don't want to scan through your list of apps? Just start typing what you're looking for, and the new Search feature responds instantly. For example, just type "w…" and before you even finish "…ord" your word processor will likely be found and selected, waiting for you to click, touch or simply hit Enter.

This is really much more functional and efficient than previous "Start button" methods, and it takes almost no time getting used to.

To set startup options go to the Desktop, right-click in the Taskbar, click Properties and select the Navigation tab.

Fan Mail
"You have a first-class company. It seems in today's world that customer service is a thing of the past. This is not so with OCS, you are a one-in-a-million company." -EH

Tired of satellite or Clearwire? You're not alone … many of our new OCS accounts are customers switching from satellite, DSL, Clear[wire] and others. Tell your friends and receive a referral credit for up to a month's free service.

OACYS WIRELESS INTERNET SERVICE PLANS

Wireless Plan Types	Average Speeds			Monthly Usage [1]	Mailboxes	One-Time Fees		Monthly Service [3]
	Min	Typ	Max			Installation	Equipment Deposit [2]	
RESIDENTIAL						*All Plans*		
Basic	125K	500K	750K	12GB	5	100.00	100.00	49.95
Premium	250K	1M	1.5M	20GB	5			79.95
BUSINESS								
Business	500K	2.5M	3.5M	40GB	10			129.95
Professional	750K	3.5M	4.5M	50GB	25			159.95
Corporate	1M	4.5M	6M	60GB	30			199.95
Enterprise	1.5M	6.5M	8M	80GB	40			249.95
MOUNTAINS								
Alpine, Pierpoint, Camp Nelson	125K	375K	750K	8GB	5			69.95

1. Monthly usage is the allowed bandwidth per month. Surcharges apply for excess usage.
2. Equipment deposit is fully refundable upon termination of service after one year.
3. For areas served by Blue Ridge tower, add $10 monthly rural service fee.

I Didn't Know That!
- OCS provides "A-to-Z" technology services
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- Programming and custom development
- eCommerce solutions
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