

July 2008

Intelligent Technical Solutions

Innovations

Happy 4th of July!

As American as apple pie, the 4th of July brings everyone together for fun and fellowship.

Independence Day commemorates the formal adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 but wasn't declared a legal holiday until 1941.

Today, we celebrate with fireworks, picnics, parades and time with friends and family. Hopefully, you take this time to recuperate from the first half of the year, work on your suntan and let your patriotism shine.

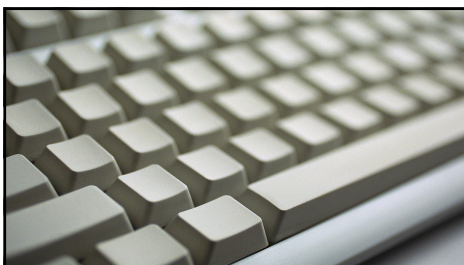
Protect Yourself! Your Keyboard May Be A Health Hazard Worthy Of Being Condemned!

Technology has infested every aspect of our businesses and personal lives. But, is computing hazardous to your health?

Absolutely! Not only does sitting at your desk, Starbucks in hand, staring at a monitor all day bring on potential weight and carpal tunnel troubles, but those precious keys you stroke can be just as filthy as a toilet seat.

That's right, according to Mail Online, computer keyboards can harbor many harmful bacteria that can give you a 'qwerty tummy', food poisoning, or worse.

'Qwerty tummy' blues... Named after the top six keys on the keyboard, 'qwerty tummy' was coined to describe the variety of illnesses contracted from dirty keyboards. Unfortunately, this is a very real problem that spreads fast through large offices especially with multiple users on each computer.



Protect yourself today.

Make sure all the keyboards in your office receive a regular cleaning every few weeks or at the very least, once a month. This will help minimize the build up of bacteria and lower your risk of becoming ill from contact.

In tests on keyboards in offices just like yours...

keyboards were found to have more bacteria than a toilet seat. Mail Online author Sean Poulter uncovered the truth in his story *How your computer keyboard is FIVE TIMES dirtier than your toilet seat—and could even give you 'qwerty tummy'*.

“Scientists swabbed 33 keyboards for food poisoning bugs, e.coli, coliforms, staphylococcus aureus, and enterobacteria and compared the results to those found on a lavatory seat and lavatory door handle.”

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How To Keep Your Laptop Secure

You can't beat the convenience of checking e-mail and hopping on the Internet at (Wi-Fi) hotspots found in airports, coffee shops, bookstores, and even in some major parks and urban areas. For the uninitiated, Wi-Fi hotspots are areas where you can use your wireless laptop to surf the Web and check e-mail, often at no cost to you or your company.

But the question you have to ask yourself is, just how safe is it to connect? With the proliferation of hackers, viruses and identity theft at an all time high,

you are smart to be concerned. Wi-Fi spots are very attractive to hackers because they can use what's called an "evil twin" connection to access your laptop.

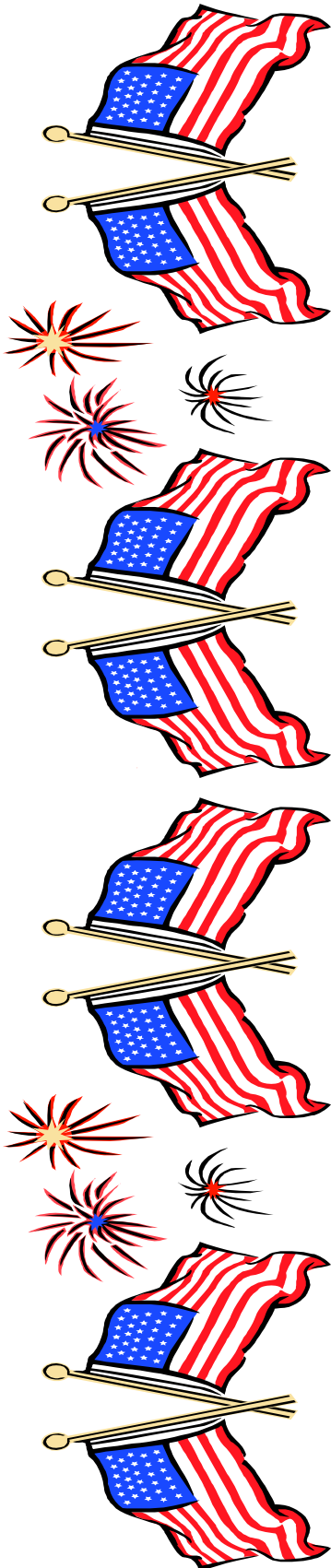
An evil twin is a wireless hotspot set up by a hacker to lure people from a nearby, legitimate hotspot. For example, when you log in at your favorite coffee shop, you might actually be logging onto the evil twin Internet connection set up by the innocent-looking person working on a laptop at the next table.

The most dangerous evil twins remain invisible and

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INTELLIGENT TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS



Your keyboard is 5 times dirtier...

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The results? Four keyboards came back as potentially health hazardous and one was even “condemned” and removed immediately for a much needed cleaning. Computing editor Sarah Kinder told Online Mail,

“Most people don’t give much thought to the grime that builds up on their PC, but if you don’t clean your computer, you might as well eat your lunch off a lavatory seat.”



When was the last time you cleaned your keyboard? Studies show one in ten of us do not clean our keyboards every month and 20% never clean our mouse. Practice basic hygiene like hand washing before and after preparing food, using the restroom or handling money. As mother always says, “keep your fingers out of your mouth and wash your hands regularly”. Nail biting or applying lip balm with your finger tips can spread harmful germs when greeting folks with a warm handshake and cause buildup on your keyboard.

Finally a good reason to take a real lunch break. Venture out of the office for a sit down lunch at a restaurant or take a sack lunch to the park. Not only will this keep harmful bacteria away from your keyboard but, it will give you time to recharge.

Why has this become such a horrible

issue? Eating while computing is the main cause. We are all guilty of eating lunch at our desk, but food is a huge part of the problem. Food deposits left on or around the keys can encourage the growth of millions of bacteria in just a few short hours. Did you know bacteria can double itself in just 16 short minutes?

3 Easy Steps To Get 7 Years Of Hassle-Free Service Out Of Your Laser Printer

Printers - the necessary evil of every office. From paper jams and error messages, to problems like smearing, misfeeds, and ghosting, printers can really make your blood pressure rise.

Plus, it’s easy to sink thousands of dollars into maintenance and repairs. If you want to avoid common printer problems AND save yourself a small fortune on replacements and repairs, follow these 3 easy steps:

Keep It Clean

There is no faster way to gunk up a laser printer and cause printing problems than by letting it get dirty.

On a monthly basis, use compressed air to blow out the inside of the printer. Remove the toner cartridge for better access, and don’t forget to do the back if it is accessible. It also helps to take a vacuum to the outside. If you print labels or use any other type of specialty media like transparencies use rubbing alcohol to clean the rollers inside the printer.

Do Your Maintenance

You can almost infinitely extend your printers lifespan by doing the regular maintenance suggested

by the manufacturer.

This includes replacing rollers, filters, and occasionally replacing the fuser (the printer’s internal furnace.) Here’s a little money-saving secret: you only need to do this type of maintenance at 1.5 to 2 times the manufacturer’s usage recommendation. In other words, if your printer’s manufacturer says to replace rollers every 100,000 pages, you really only need to do so every 150,000 to 200,000 pages.

Use a Surge Protector

Nothing will send your printer to the bone yard faster than an electrical surge caused by lightning or other issues on the power grid.

When internal components are fried, it is often cheaper to buy a new printer than it is to fix the existing one. It is easy to protect yourself with a \$25 surge protector. DO NOT plug a laser printer into a UPS or other battery backup system. The printer’s power draw is too much for a battery to handle.

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Do your homework; find the lowest gas prices in town

When will the rollercoaster of increases and decreases finally quit? If you have surfed the web for answers to these questions, you have seen the massive collection of efforts to boycott or relieve prices. However, people keep filling up.



Unfortunately, most of us are completely addicted to driving despite the cost.

Have you tried to trim down the expenses? If keeping your air conditioner off is just not an option, you love the convenience of the drive-thru or your car just doesn't have cruise control, take the next best step—don't pay the *highest* gas prices in town.

Shop around before you fill up! Take a few extra moments on your home computer, handheld or at the office to check out your local gas prices. Go to gasprices.mapquest.com and type in

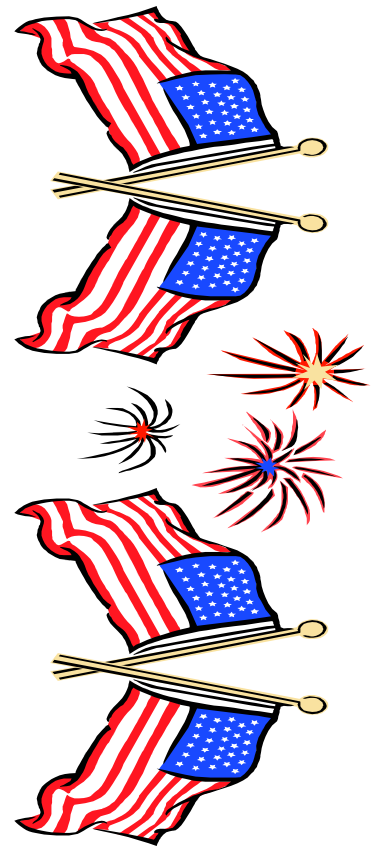
an address to find the best possible prices close by. You can view a full listing of gas stations in your area and search through the results by price, distance or even name.

If you prefer a specific brand of gas, you may browse all the options in your area. Mapquest recognizes not everyone wants to search the masses, they just

want to browse results in their city and state. There are literally hundreds of pages that allow you to narrow your results and browse applicable stations.

What about alternative fuels? Don't worry, MapQuest has covered all the basis. You can refine your search to E85 ethanol, biodiesel, hydrogen, even electric recharging stations only. MapQuest actually reaches out to the National Renewable

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How To Keep Your Laptop Secure

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allow you to do business as usual. But in the background, they record everything you are typing. Buy something online and they are recording your credit card information. Log on to your bank account, and they can grab your password. Some hotspots may even feed you a fake web page after you log on asking you to update your billing information. This is the same tactic used in phishing scams.

So what can you do to make sure you are not giving an evil twin access to your laptop?

First, know the name of the hotspot you're going to use by asking someone who works there. Some businesses will give you printed instructions that include the hotspot name. Again, be careful. Hackers will try to name their evil twin network by a very similar name as the real hotspot, and may even show up as a stronger signal.

The best protection you can have is connecting via your company's VPN (virtual private network). A VPN will protect your online information by encrypting your data and activity even if you're connected through an evil twin.

If you don't have a company VPN, you should assume that someone is looking over your shoulder and recording everything you type in. Therefore, the BEST protection without a VPN is to never type in information such as credit cards, passwords, or social security numbers when connected to a public Wi-Fi hotspot.



"DO YOU AND I REALLY HAVE TO USE THE INTERNET TO COLLABORATE WITH EACH OTHER?"

10 Most Commonly Used Passwords

In PC Magazine's May issue they list the 10 most commonly used passwords. If you are using any of these, please turn off your computer immediately - or change your password. Adding numbers, upper case characters and other special characters (#, \$, @, !, etc.) will make for added protection.

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. password | 6. monkey |
| 2. 123456 | 7. myspace1 |
| 3. qwerty | 8. password1 |
| 4. abc123 | 9. blink182 |
| 5. letmein | 10. (your first name) |



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“We make all of your computer problems go away without the cost of a full-time IT staff”

Full-time IT, at part-time prices! — UNLIMITED support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for just like payroll!

The lowest gas prices...

(Continued from page 3)

Energy Laboratory (NREL) to obtain listings of your local alternative fuel locations.

Updated 7 times each day, the MapQuest gas price tool brings you the most accurate prices possible. If you could save 10¢ per gallon on a fill up, would you?

MapQuest even includes a gas price calculator... Figure out the cost for your commute or summer getaway by entering the trip length, gas price from the station you're going to fill up at and the miles per gallon for your vehicle. Then select "calculate" to see your total gas cost and plan ahead for the expenses.

Shop around! Find the best price in town for your specific needs at: gasprices.mapquest.com

Inquiring Minds...

Netflix Player has instant viewing features just like a PC. The Netflix Player by Roku is finally here. One of the first of its kind. For just \$99.99, you can have a library of 10,000 movies and television episodes at your finger tips. You would expect this type of service to cost an arm and a leg, nope! Netflix is not adding any extra fees for usage; you only pay your normal Netflix subscription costs between \$4.99 and \$16.99.

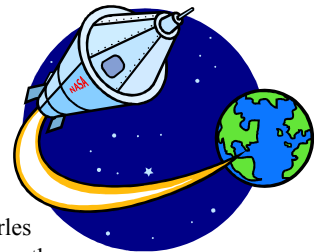
This compact Netflix Player surely takes the cake. You have all the ease of watching a DVD or DVR show. You can pause, rewind or play anytime and it is guaranteed to work with your television. The Netflix Player is equipped with standard RCA jacks, S-video, component video, HDMI, and optical audio. So, you can hook up the ancient television hiding in your bedroom closet or that brand new HDTV you just purchased with your tax refund.

What about picture quality? CNET reviewed this product and found "Setup is simple, and — if you've got a solid broadband connection — picture quality is acceptable and streaming perform-

ance was almost entirely lag-free." That is more than I can say for satellite service.

Outer space tourism taking shape?

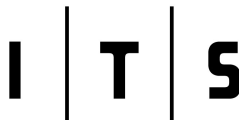
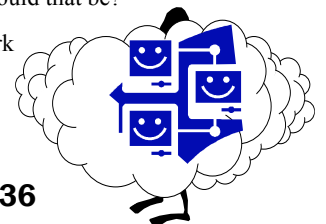
Yes! Now you can plan a trip to the "outer limits". Charles Simonyi, better known as the Development Manager for Microsoft's Word and Excel programs, has taken up exozotic travel. According to All Things Digital by The Wall Street Journal, Charles was one of the first space tourists, having spent 11 days on board the International Space Station last quarter.



What's in your network?

Imagine if you lost days worth of work, financial records, or even your entire client database. What would happen if your network went down and no one could access e-mail or files. How frustrating would that be?

Give us a call today to set up your Free Network Audit. We will identify potential threats hiding in your network and help you prevent costly down time.



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