



**Computer
Care**

We Make House Calls!

Since 1991

2008 EOY Edition

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Wow, can you believe that another year has gone by already? Every year seems to fly by faster and faster.

Many of you have been with Computer Care since we started back in February of 1991. Some of you even knew me before then and may go back to 1983! That's a long, long time ago.

During that time, much has happened. Marriage to my wonderful wife Faye in 1991. Fuzzy our dog in 1992 (now 16.5), Jacob arrived in March of 1996. And me still doing Computer Care and having fun solving problems, meeting new people and introducing new technology to you all.

Happy Holidays to You!

As I write this, clients that have moved out of town to places south and west are emailing me about snow on the ground. We have none yet, now at the beginning of December. Snow brings the holidays season even closer. But hopefully we won't have a 6 month long winter!

Neat and Handy Utilities

Everyone likes to have a search program that's faster and more thorough than the one Microsoft includes in Windows. Google, Yahoo, MSN and others have ones you can download and install to your computer. But they tend to be memory hogs and slow down the computer quite a bit. If you have a fast processor and lots of memory, that's not an issue. But if you don't

(even if you do) there is a better program out there. It is small and very efficient and free. It's called "Everything Search". You can download it from www.voidtools.com and install it. It works great and I have been running on all my computers for a few months now.

Internet Filtering

Everyone with kids is worried about what they may be able to find and view on the internet. Finding and recommending good software to filter what's on the internet has been difficult.

Now with a "teenager" in my own house, it was time for me to make a decision and commit to software that would keep him "honest". The software is FREE. Yes FREE. Go to www.k9webprotection.com and sign up for the FREE program. They will ask for a email address, user name and password. Then you will be emailed a link for the software to download and install on the computer your child uses. You will also be given a activation password.

K9webprotection works great! It has been on Jakes computer since September. K9 allows me to set on and off access times for each day of the week. For example, if Jake decides to try to access the web at 3am, the program will prevent that from happening. The controller (you the parent) can also set limits for the program to prevent or allow instant messag-

ing, file sharing (downloading music or other content—such as video, movies, pictures, etc.) and certain web sites and more. It's a very versatile program and works extremely well. I highly recommend it.

If you are looking for something more complete that also monitors email, keystrokes, instant messaging and can email you reports with what your kids are up to drop me an email and I will tell you what I am using. It also runs in stealth mode, so the computer user does not know it is running. So far it has my son baffled.

Use your Cell Phone as Your Home Phone?

Do you find that you are using your cell phone more and more at home or work? Is your cell coverage great in some places within your place and negligible in others? Well now there is a way to extend that coverage through out. With the addition of a Link to Cell device by Panasonic, you can place your cell phone (Bluetooth enabled) next to the device, the two link together. You then have one to six cordless phones placed in convenient areas. Pick up the cordless and make or receive calls. Plus it has caller id for names stored in the cordless' memories. Computer Care can sell and install this really neat device to you. The model with one cordless handset is just \$99. Multiple handsets are more plus a slight installation fee.

This is a fantastic and simple device that has me thinking that I will soon be using my cell number (348-3289) as my main business number and discontinuing my 567-3505 number. In a short 3 months, the LTC would pay for itself! Plus the LTC can handle up to 2 different cell phone numbers, so you can link two cell phones or yours and your spouses. Simple and efficient and a inexpensive idea. Call Computer Care for more information.

Picture Resizing

One thing that drives me crazy in Vista is the inability to resize pictures for anything other than email. A good utility is needed and I found one. It is called: VSO Image Resizer. There is a free version and a pay version. I am using the free version and it is excellent. It does everything that I need (that Vista does not do). VSO offers other features but I am mainly using the resize feature. It can be downloaded from: www.vso-software.com.

Google's Internet Browser

Google is now competing with Microsoft on many levels. One new level is the web browser called Chrome. Google Chrome first became available a few months ago and is a very interesting browser. Not only does it look very different from Internet Explorer but it performs MUCH faster than IE. It's worth downloading and trying. You may like it. Go to www.google.com and click more and even more. Chrome is in the list to download.

Wither Windows XP

As 2009 approaches quickly, computers with Windows XP are getting very difficult to get. That window of opportunity is getting smaller and smaller. So if you are thinking of getting a new computer and want XP instead of Vista, do it now or you may never get another chance.

So...maybe instead you want to get a new machine with Vista on it? Some features that you want:

1. A multi core processor (Dual core is standard now)
2. Two or more gigs of ram
3. A fast hard drive that's at least 120 gigs

Now, do you want a laptop/notebook or desktop computer? How about a Netbook computer? What's a netbook you might ask? A net-

book is a new generation of small, not very powerful, mini laptops. For example, Acer has an award winning netbook called the Aspire One. It has a 8.9 inch wide screen, 1.5 gig processor, Windows XP Home and about 3.5 hours of battery life. How much for all this? How does under \$400 sound to you? There are a few versions (as of 11/2008) but most are under that \$400 mark.

These netbooks are perfect for email and internet and a few other small jobs. They are not powerful units, so manipulating pictures, compressing numbers, saving music and graphics, accounting and other programs will not leave you happy with the performance. But if email and internet in a small, portable device is what you need then a Netbook is perfect for you.

If your existing laptop or desktop computer is running slow, there are many options that may extend the life of the computer. Or if you're thinking about buying a new one, give Computer Care a call and we'll discuss it with you. We'll give you some ideas to think about and suggest a few models that would be perfect for you now and give you room to grow into the future. We are authorized Microsoft, Acer and Panasonic and other brand Resellers that not only sell the equipment but also support them too. Plus we can build that custom computer if a pre-built one is not to be found with your specifications. That computer that the guy at Best Buy or Staples suggests may sound great until you get it home and find it's pretty slow or you can't run the programs you want to or the battery life is too short or you are squinting at the screen.

Every computer we sell is custom selected for you. It will not only be capable of doing what you want to do now, but also give you room for growth for the future.

Remember, Computer Care does sell computers. *Many people are surprised when*

they hear this. We can supply you with a much better solution that what Dell or other mail order companies can provide you with and provide much better support than all of the mass merchants. Give us a call at (413) 348-3289 or email us at computer care@comcast.net.

Plus we can transfer all your pictures, data, email and what ever files you have on your old computer to your new one. Also help you set up and optimize the new one so it performs as you expect it too.

All computers sold by Computer Care come with prep, delivery, setup, data transfer and at least one EXTRA hour of FREE training after the day of delivery. Plus FREE phone and email support forever from Computer Care. We may not be as cheap as Best Buy, but we'll outperform them in support and hand holding over the life of the computer. Don't believe me, then ask me for some references. We'll happily provide them.

Digital Surveillance Systems

Computer Surveillance is something that we have been involved in for a few years now. But especially the last two, we have been a authorized Wilife Pro Reseller. Wilife is a division of Logitech now, having been bought by them in 2008.

A Wilife Pro system is anywhere from one to six cameras. They are all linked thru software a special "hub" (linking device) to a computer. The cameras are indoor and outdoor and some are stealthily designed as clocks with hidden cameras inside. The outside ones require very little light and can capture amazing video in very dark situations. The indoor cameras can be focused and aimed at the area you want to cover.

All video is saved to a hard drive and kept for a set (by you) period of time. The video

can then be reviewed at a future date, saved as video or individual pictures and used as evidence for the police. We have a client that did just that a few months ago and the video helped convict the guilty party. They can also be used to watch your babysitter or nanny, watch your kids while you are gone, see who rings your doorbell. And the cameras can be remotely accessed from any computer with a internet connection from anywhere in the world! Contact us about computer surveillance for business and home.

We can show you some video examples from my existing customers and also show how the video works from a demo running in my office.

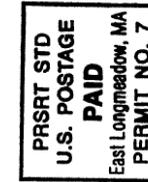
Reliable Resources

One of the things I always get asked about is "do you know of other people that perform services as reliably as yourself?"

I belong to a small business networking group in which we all provide individual excellent services. We're a group of around 20 people, so we're not too large and all know each other. I use them myself and have complete faith in recommending them.

So if you find you are in need of a new car, mechanic, printer, web designer, real estate lawyer, realtor, landscaper, etc. Please check out www.ebbegroup.com and look at the list of members. I can't speak highly enough for everyone. They're all excellent and have become my friends!

In closing this years newsletter, let me invite you to my web site; www.wemakehousecalls.biz as there is a 2nd sheet of useful and handy information in the newsletter section. It will be titled: Winter 2008 Newsletter.



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Return Service Requested

An Enemy of All Computers

One of the most common causes of problems in all computers is dust. All computers have fans that circulate air over hot components. Some computers have multiple fans in them that pull air into the computer and then to blow air out of the computer.

When the air is sucked in, so is dust, dander, animal hair, smoke from cigarettes/cigars/pipes and other small things floating in the air. All these get stuck in the fan blades, heat sink fins and everything else within the computer. After a while, it starts to build up which causes important components to overheat. This overheating may eventually cause the computer to fail. I have seen even the most clean homes have component failure due to dust inside the computer.

How do you prevent this? Keep the room that the computer is in clean. If your computer sits on the floor, then clean it regularly, clean the vents (when the computer is off) and all around the computer. Also placement of the computer is important. If it's on the floor, it will be more dirty as the dust seems to land on the floor. Is there a door to another room nearby, then dust gets moved from room to room and eventually sucked into your computer.

Where is a good place to keep it the cleanest? I have found that having the computer on a desk about waist height works best and keeps the interior the cleanest. Dust is the enemy, do your best to keep the area clean.

Laptop Cord Care

When I deliver a laptop/notebook, I explain to everyone how to properly take care of the power cord/charger. Most people just wrap it tightly around the black box in the middle of the cord. This is the worst thing that you could do. Tightly wrapping the cord causes breaks in

the wires and greatly shortens not only the life of the cords but also could shorten the laptop life if the power adapter electrically shorts out.

You want to gently coil the heavier power cord and then the smaller cord (that plugs into the laptop) and then wrap that with a Velcro strap. Doing this will extend the life of your power adapter and laptop/notebook exponentially. If you take the short extra time to do this, your laptop will last a few years longer and save you money in the future.

You also want to treat your laptop VERY gently. When removing it from it's case, gently lay it on the table or work area. Don't let it drop or get banged by anything. Laptops are very fragile. Also no food or drink nearby. Unless you are using a Panasonic Toughbook that is water resisitant, you need to keep fluids far from your computer. Food is another no-no. Crumbs can build up under the keyboard disabling some keys very easily. It's best to use your laptop in a clean and safe environment. By doing this, it should last for years.

Office 2007 File Formats

Some people are using Microsoft's new Office 2007. If you use this version office you know that it not only has a dramatically new interface, but also a proprietary file format. This file format is fine if you only share office files with other Office 2007 users. But if you share files with Office 2003/2000 users, you know they can't open or view your files. Now there's a fix for everyone. Microsoft has come out with a conversion add-in for Office 2000/2003. A free download is available at www.microsoft.com. If you are having trouble finding it, email me and I'll send you the link. You can also check the newsletter section of www.wemakehousecalls.biz for the link and other useful information. It's about 30 megs in size. Or users of Office 2007

can save their files in the Office 2003 format. I suggest that everyone download and install the conversion program for best results.

An alternative to Microsoft Office is openoffice.org. Open Office is a set of FREE office programs (write, spreadsheet, database, presentation and more) that read and write all versions of MS Office files and of course create new ones. Version 3 was released recently and reads and writes the latest Office file formats with out the need for conversion.

Need a Sticky Note?

Post-it notes are something we all use. They are very handy to have available. Having a computerized version is also helpful. I used to use the free version of 3M's Post it notes software, but I now use Sticky Pad. It is a free Post it type software. Sticky Pad resides in the system tray and one click brings it to life. You can create a new note, change the color, font, etc. You customize the appearance for what you need. If you want it in bright colors or quieter you decide. When the computer is shut down and rebooted the notes you have placed are still there. The notes can also be printed. There are other options too. This is a very handy piece of software! Visit www.greeneclipse.com.

Google Earth

Many people have downloaded and installed Google Earth in the past few years. Not only is it really neat to "fly" to places around the planet, see pictures and satellite views but you can also post pictures yourself thru Panamoria.com.

Thru Panoramio.com you can post pictures and a description and a location and they will be visible to others in Google Earth.

Do you like to fly?

Google Earth has a built in flight simulator mode. My son Jake actually told me about

this. He has learned to fly and control the airplane while flying around the world. It's a very neat feature. To access the flight simulator, first click Help, Check for Updates online. Once you are updated to the latest version, then click Tools and Flight Simulator. Happy Flying!