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Happy New Year! I hope that the holidays created wonderful memories for you, and that you were surrounded by those you love. Now we enter into another year, and let's pray that it's peaceful and healthy for all of us! As always, there's lots of news out there about computers, internet services and even TV! I had someone ask me about switching from Time Warner to Verizon Fios because of the difference in price between the two services. As everyone knows, Time Warner has once again raised their rates and this time for the modem. I think this is important to address in this newsletter because it is all very confusing. It's like the Coke and Pepsi debate!

First of all, if you are a Time Warner Subscriber, did you know that your bill will be cheaper if you include their phone service? It's true that if you bundle services (internet, cable TV and phone) they'll lower your rate.

They'll also let you keep your old phone number and include free long distance calling. You need to be assertive when you call them and tell them that you want to see if they can help you to reduce your monthly bill or that you'll switch to Verizon. They know that the competition will give you a lower price, so they'll work with you. See how fast they'll offer you a better price! I'm including a link that will help you with this.

http://www.ehow.com/how/4932304_lower-time-warner-cable-bill.html
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Verizon is a lot cheaper for now....but did you know that Verizon is talking merger with Time Warner and Comcast to share their bandwidth (air signals)? When we talk merger we know that the prices will rise, and with Verizon I believe that it's just a matter of time until you see the prices go up for them. One other thing I'd like to share is that when I work with clients that have Verizon/Time Warner, Verizon is always difficult to deal with and I've had some nightmares with fixing the service problems. Trying to get them to work with me has been a runaround, and there's always a

wait for clients to have someone come to the house. Time Warner always comes in a timely manner and I don't think I've ever heard anyone complain about their service. With both companies you're paying for tech support as well as home visits, but I feel you get better service from Time Warner. I'm glad I haven't had to pay extra for all the times that I've had them here to correct a problem with the TV signal or Internet!

I know that I was upset with the extra charge from Time Warner for their modem/router, but I also know that if I were to return their modem/router and buy my own, then I'm on my own! One of the most difficult things for people to do is work on wireless connections. If you have their modem/router they'll fix it for you and replace the hardware when necessary. If you do decide to buy a modem/router to replace theirs, Time Warner will only approve 3 models. Motorola SB5101, SB5101U and SBG901. So, Coke or Pepsi? My choice is still Time Warner.

Since we're talking about Cable companies, here's something else you should be aware of. ☺ The FCC has eliminated a law preventing cable companies from scrambling basic tier digital service. What this means is that in 1994 a law was passed that would stop cable companies from scrambling the signal and then force people to lease set-top decoder boxes to view programming. Now they've done away with this law and it means that people with basic cable would have to rent a box from their cable company; be it Time Warner, Verizon or Comcast. Right now the set top box is rented to people who want premium channels etc. I guess what they're saying is there's no free TV anymore!

I'm a great supporter of Kim Komando and if you haven't checked her out, you should. She's a walking encyclopedia of information pertaining to computers, mobile devices and anything that's electronic. I had just checked out her website and found that she's selling an antenna for around \$75.00 that will pick up most of the local TV channels. If you're using basic cable this is an alternative to check out. I'm sending a link so you can read more about it. <http://store.komando.com/p-1558-the-leaf-plus-hdtv-antenna.aspx> <%20%20http://store.komando.com/p-1558-the-leaf-plus-hdtv-antenna.aspx>

Another alternative is watching TV on your computer. The internet carries most stations (not HBO or Showtime) and you can watch TV for free. With a simple cable (HDMI) you can connect your computer to your HD TV to watch your shows on your TV. And if you haven't heard of Roku, Google it and see how you can get TV programs for free on your TV with this device

and a simple internet connection. There are options!

I'm pretty sure I've mentioned this before, but it's worth mentioning again, if you're using a laptop and you leave it plugged in 90-100 percent of the time, remove the battery from the machine. Here's why! Heat from the running computer can shorten the battery's life. For that matter, the heat from the battery doesn't do the computer any good either. Once the battery is charged remove it, and put the battery back in when you need to use the laptop and it's not convenient to plug it in.

Not too long ago I sent out an email about Internet Explorer and the security issues that were involved with it. Well, here we go again! Last week Symantec Security Researchers found what they call a "zero day exploit". What is this? A way for a virus or malware to attack our computer because of a flaw in Internet Explorer. I strongly suggest that you use Firefox, Chrome or Safari to avoid any infections on your machine. Here's a new computer term for you. We all get notifications to update our "**Java**" and we should. Java is a programming language that allows programmers to create small programs that can be placed in websites.

Next time you see an animation running on the internet, it's probably Java!

Download for this month.... <http://Preyproject.com> <<http://Preyproject.com>> It lets you keep track of your laptop, phone and tablet whenever stolen or missing. It might not be for everyone, but it's a free service that can give peace of mind. There's a video on the website that takes you step by step to show you how to set it up.

Don't forget that maintenance is always important where your computer is concerned. If it's slow and not running right, it's time for a tune-up and make sure you're security is updated and running on a regular basis. I'm still copying VHS tapes and Cassettes if anyone is looking to have that kind of work done, and my news for the month is that the college contacted me and asked me to come back and teach a digital photography class. I'll be returning in April for the Spring Semester and it will be nice to be in the classroom again for a few weeks.

Stay Warm & Stay Healthy!

Shirl