November 2016 Newsletter

When November rolls around I start thinking about Thanksgiving dinner at Colleen & Frank's house and all I have to be thankful for, that Christmas is coming **faster** each year, that snow & cold will soon be popping up on the weather maps, and that the elections will soon be over and life should return to normal….whatever that is! ☺ I also think about praying for our country that we make right choices. I'm also grateful for the work I do and for all of you.

So what's new this month? Well, it's not good. We have exploding Samsung washers, Samsung Galaxy Note 7 phones that catch on fire, and recalls on cars that have problems with the software that controls the brakes, and now Smart TV hackings and add the Yahoo breach, Amazon scare with passwords, etc. Someone wrote to me this past month and said, "you even tell us about washers having problems" (Thanks Bunny)….well it's part of the news that affects you so you will get things like this every now and then. ☺

- I asked if anyone had any questions they wanted me to respond to in my newsletter and there was "1" person.   Thank you Cheryl! ☺ The question was a good one regarding backing up files….
"How to calculate the sizes of files so I could then use a flash drive (or other medium you might suggest) to back up files that change frequently."

  That's always a mystery to people. We talk about megabytes, gigabytes and terabytes but we can't actually "see" how big they are. For those of you who have "some" idea of what a file size is, you can look at this data chart to see what these sizes translate to.

Data Measurement Chart	
Data Measurement	**Size**
Bit	Single Binary Digit (1 or 0)
Byte	8 bits
Kilobyte (KB)	= 1,024 Bytes
Megabyte (MB)	= 1,024 Kilobytes
Gigabyte (GB)	= 1,024 Megabytes
Terabyte (TB)	= 1,024 Gigabytes
Petabyte (PB)	= 1,024 Terabytes
Exabyte (EB)	= 1,024 Petabyte

- There's an easy way to find out how much space a file will take up. Every file or folder has properties that tells how big it is. Just do a **right mouse click on the folder or file and go to "properties"** in the menu that comes up. Look at the "size" and it will let you know the amount of space it requires on a drive. (Mac users right mouse click on the file and look for "get info")

- To find out how much room is available on your external hard drive, go to **"Computer"**, find the **external drive** and **do a right mouse click on it**, choose **properties** and you should see a **pie chart** that shows how much space is used and how much space is free. (Mac users go to Finder, under Devices find your external drive, right mouse click on it and choose Get Info)
- If you want to know what size drive you need there are some things to consider. What do you need to backup? **Photos? Movies? Music? Recorded TV shows?** If you do any of these, you'll need **at least a 500 GB hard drive**. If you have documents, spreadsheets, and photos, you can get a **250 GB** hard drive for most storage needs and have enough room.
- My preference is an external drive. The reason being that the wear and tear from putting the flash drive in the USB port and taking it out of the port can eventually damage the drive. It weakens the part that is inserted into the port and it can eventually break off.
- Backup should be done at least once a week if create a lot of new files, do lot of saving of files on your machine, or make changes to your files. If you're a card player and email person, once a month should be fine to back everything up. ☺
- When you back up your files, you might get a message that the file already exists and do you want to merge it with the older one. Just make sure that it's the same document or you could lose your prior information. Best way to know is to check the file size and date. If they're different dates and times, it's not the same document or photo so go ahead and Merge!
- If you have an external drive or flash drive, always make sure that you disconnect it after backing up. Viruses can get onto an external drive if it's plugged in.

Today we use many different devices to stream our programs and music to our TV. We hear about cutting the cord all the time (getting rid of Cable), and many of us are trying to make that happen. So now we are using

Roku, Blue Ray DVD players, Chrome Cast, Slingbox, Apple TV, Amazon Fire, etc. to make the transition possible. The problem that we face is that the more of these devices we use the quicker we run out of ports to plug them in to. A lot of the TV's have only 2 and possibly 3 **HDMI** ports. Our friend **Bob Brady** called and presented this dilemma to me, and I found a simple way to take care of it. It's called a HDMI Switch and they can be purchased at a very reasonable price. This link takes you to Amazon.com, but I'm sure you can buy them in many stores locally that carry computer and TV items.

https://www.amazon.com/Xcellent-Global-Splitter-Selector-Switcher/dp/B00JO64EEO/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1476218492&sr=8-3&keywords=hdmi%2Bmultiple%2Bport&th=1

Hold off on that purchase of a Macbook. Apple is in the process of making some major changes to their latest model. I'm not sure if it's a good thing or not since they're doing away with the USB ports on the Mac's. This means with the latest MacBook refreshes, we are going to say goodbye to the SD card slot, the Thunderbolt 2 and USB 3 ports, and the MagSafe 2 power connector and adding the "USB-C port". So what exactly is a USB-C port? It's smaller than the traditional USB port and it is reversible. USB-C also has twice the academic speed of USB 3.0 and it can handle higher power loads, which is a good thing. USB-C has a different port shape so USB 3.0 adapters will have to be purchased separately to connect older gadgets, like our flash drives, printers, etc. Also, similar to the 2015 MacBook, charging will be done via USB-C port and a separate USB 3.0 to Thunderbolt 3 adapter for peripherals will be required. (Apple conveniently sells a $79 USB-C dock that will provide multiple ports for USB 3.0, power and HDMI video.) Change is tough, and it can be expensive too!

 List of things you should do this month!

- **Change your Amazon Password Immediately** – They're claiming they haven't had a security breach, but don't be surprised if you get a letter from them telling you to change the password for your account. Best to just do it!
- **Update Chrome** - Click the Chrome menu that looks like three horizontal lines on the far upper-right hand corner of the screen >> Update Google Chrome >> Relaunch. They had a security warning this month.
- **Anti-Virus software** - If you haven't upgraded to the paid version, now is the time!!
- **Change 3 Privacy settings in Windows 10**

1. Cortana - In the Settings, you can switch Cortana off, and there's a link to manage what she already learned about you. You can also stop Bing from recording information about you to improve your searches.
2. Turn off your location tracking - To turn off Windows 10 lock screen ads, on the same Settings page, go to "Personalization" and click the "Lock Screen" section. Under "Background," switch to another option other than "Windows spotlight." (You can set it to either "Picture" or "Slideshow.")
3. Turn off your advertising ID - In Privacy, go to "General" and switch "Let apps use my advertising ID" to Off. Now, advertisers won't get your advertiser ID when you visit a page.

 Are you looking for a second (dual) monitor? Many people like to have a second one to distribute their work on two different screens. This **app** will do just that with and you can use your **iPad** as a screen. It works with **Mac and PC's**. It's good for when you're working on photo editing, or reading multiple documents. It saves you from having to buy a second monitor and setting it up, not to mention the space a big monitor takes

up in your work space. https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/duet-display/id935754064?mt=8

 Facebook Hoax!

This post is the latest hoax spreading on Facebook. It alleges Facebook's privacy policy has changed so that all your pictures, posts and messages will become public unless you do one thing. You must post a status update stating that you do not give Facebook permission to share your content. If you encounter this post, or a similar version in your News Feed, just ignore it.

 Big News

I'm sure that everyone by now has seen the news reports about AT&T acquiring Time Warner, and you're wondering what it all means. I think that for now we don't have to worry. The merger still needs government regulatory approval before it becomes official, and that could take over a year. The main worry is that the deal will create a monopoly that will affect advertising, competition and pricing. I watched the interview on **CNN** with **AT&T's** Randall Stephenson and **Time Warner's** Jeff Bewkes, and I was taken with the way they talked about how people are "demanding more" and that's their goal, to make all the content accessible and faster for not just cable TV but for other devices. While listening to them I thought; they aren't concerned with the people who are on a budget, they want you to pay more and add more to your current plans.

What this deal means for consumers (Taken from the Daily Gazette)

A successful merger would pair one of the biggest U.S. telecommunication companies (AT&T) with a large content creator (Time Warner). One concern this raises is if AT&T would then give preferential treatment to content from Time Warner's companies. As of now, brands and developers must pay to deliver content on gadgets that are on AT&T's network.

- **Advertising** - AT&T says the merger would help it **create targeted ads for its customers**. By collecting data on its customers, AT&T would be able to tailor ads based on their preferences. The company says targeted ads would bring in more revenue which it could then put into content creation. This could help create less expensive subscription packages for phones, which is an increasingly popular way for consumers to watch videos.
- **Competition** - HBO, CNN, TBS, TNT, Warner Brothers film studios and even DC Entertainment are all a part of Time Warner. It even owns 10 percent of the Hulu streaming subscriptions service. These content providers would gain a huge advantage over smaller providers if the merger is approved with AT&T's distribution capability.
- **Pricing** - This is the issue that has most skeptics concerned. They are worried about how Time Warner's content will be offered to existing AT&T's customers. Or that AT&T will try and bring in new customers by giving special access to Time Warner's content. AT&T could let its customers stream certain content without adding to their data usage, meaning they wouldn't have to worry about going over their data plan limit. Skeptics fear that customers of other telecom companies would have to pay more for the same content.

One footnote to all of this. "Rumor" has it that Verizon is in trouble if the merger goes through. They're already plagued with the recently purchased Yahoo who has had massive security breaches.

          Now that you've read this, maybe you're closer to cutting the cord on cable and going with streaming services like Hulu. If so, click on this link and read the article. They break it down so you know what you'll be

getting for your money! http://cordcuttersnews.com/exclusive-full-breakdown-of-hulus-new-live-tv-service/ If anyone has already switched over, I'd love to hear what you have to say on this topic!

amazon Prime

Talking about Streaming content, what about those of you who have Amazon Prime? If you need to register your device (TV, Blu-ray Player, Home Theatre, DVR, Kindle Fire etc) so you can watch movies, here's the link with the model number of your device. You can click on the button to the right to register it.
https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/ontv/devices/ref=atv_dp_hd_dev - Blu-ray Player

weebly

If you have used a company called Weebly to create your webpage, it's time to change your password. 43 Million accounts were hacked and it's recommended that you watch your bank accounts for fraudulent activity, check other accounts (since often we use the same password for everything), and watch out for phishing emails and texts that claim to be from Weebly.

ixquick
the world's most private search engine

Are you looking for a safe way to surf the web? I'm sharing with you three search sites that don't track you like Google.

- **Yippy** - This search engine was designed to automatically detect and block adult content. That means you no longer have to worry about pornography, gambling sites, sex product sites and other websites popping up while you're browsing the internet. When it comes to privacy, Yippy has you covered on that front as well. While it may collect anonymous information about your computer, as long as you're in the United States it won't collect any personal information such as your name, address or phone number.
- **DuckDuckGo** - This search engine will not track or target your IP address or search history, which will actually get you more results. DuckDuckGo also has nifty tricks and features like a calculator, unit converter and even a custom interface with search shortcuts and Instant Answers. You can also make DuckDuckGo an extension of your browser and activate more privacy settings to better protect your anonymity.
- **Ixquick** - Ixquick claims to be the world's most private browser. It also goes by the name **StartPage.com** so you might have heard of it. It doesn't record your IP address, browser information, or search history, so you are safe from the prying eyes of advertisers. You can even search via proxy, so sites can't detect your real IP address.
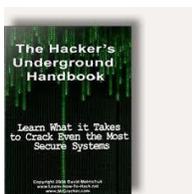
I should mention something about the recent Cyber Attack that took place on October 21st. It was initiated by an underground hacking group and it affected websites like Amazon (sorry Ro), Reddit, Etsy, Spotify, Comcast, Pinterest, CNBC.com, Paypal, etc. There is speculation that the Russians could be behind the attack. It was called a Denial of Service "DoS" and it targeted the backbone of our Internet…what's allowed or in this case "not allowed" to be accessed when you're trying to go to certain webpages.   The big question is, are you in any way affected by this attack? **Yes you are**. You first of all were blocked from going to certain websites and your Internet Speed was probably a lot slower than usual. DDoS is an attack where a targeted website (like Amazon) is flooded by an overwhelming amount of requests from millions of connected machines in order to bring it down. Traditionally, these attacks are

launched from compromised (infected) computers and mobile gadgets collectively nicknamed **"botnet."**

However, recent DDoS attacks on a security blogger's website and French website host OVH reveal that now, **it's not just computers that are being utilized as botnets** - even Internet of Things (IoT) **appliances** are now fair game.

This means **unsecured routers, printers, IP web cameras, DVRs, cable boxes, connected "smart" appliances such as Wi-Fi light bulbs and smart locks can be hijacked and involved in cyberattacks without the owner knowing about it.** To remain unnoticed, compromised appliances could be sending out small trickles of data to make the attack discrete. Multiply that by millions and what you have is the perfect DDoS attack vector.

How serious is this? The recent attacks are reported to be the largest targeted DDoS attempts ever, with a sustained data stream of 620 Gbps (gigabytes per second) and even reaching data rates of over a terabit per second, all accomplished by enslaving connected Internet appliances via a Trojan program infection. Does this sound like something that Spielberg would write into a movie? He might now if he's doing something based on a true story!

I know this has been a lot of technical information to absorb this month, but it's important for you to hear it and hopefully understand it. It only confirms my feelings about upgrading your security. It also is a wakeup call to **"UPDATE"** on a regular basis **firmware** for devices and **passwords**.

 Maybe now you'll want to send me some of your questions so we can tackle some easier topics. Please email me with anything that you'd like to know about that can be shared in my monthly newsletter. Remember, there's no stupid questions....especially when it comes to computers.

Computer Term of the Month – <mark>Botnet</mark>

A network of private computers infected with malicious software and controlled as a group without the owners' knowledge, e.g., to send spam messages.
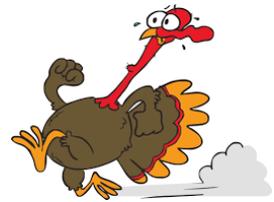
So, there you have it; another busy month in the world of computers. Hope you all have a happy "Turkey Day"!

Warm Regards,

Shirl