

Technology Corner
By: George Champine

Using a Print Server to share a printer

An increasing number of people have more than one computer. Each computer needs access to a printer. One approach is to have a separate printer for each computer. The disadvantages with this approach are that: one must buy ink for each of the printers, and the extra space required. Another approach, especially with laptops, is to swap cables. This can be very inconvenient however. If you have a router, which allows more than one computer to have access to Internet, there is a better way. (See the Technology Corner in the issue of the Quailrunner from June 2005 to read about routers or I can send it to you).

My preferred way to share a printer among several computers is to use a print server. These devices, which cost from about \$15 (on sale) to \$50, allow several computers to share one printer. Print servers come in two kinds: parallel port, and USB port. You should get the kind that matches your printer. Older style printers have a parallel port, while newer ones have a USB port.

The print server plugs into the router with an Ethernet cable just as the computers do. Then the printer plugs into the print server, which is about the size of a deck of cards. The software to set up the connection from the computer to the printer comes on a CD that can be installed and run in about five minutes.

If you have a laptop that uses a wireless connection to the router, it is even better. By using the laptop with the print server, you can print from the laptop no matter where you are using it.

New Internet Backup Service

Backup of data on a computer is very important because all machines fail eventually. Yet it is difficult for many people because of its complexity. A new backup service over the Internet may solve this problem at an affordable cost. The service is from Carbonite at <http://www.carbonite.com>. The service is automatic in that it scans your machine and automatically backs up your data files. If there is a failure, it will do an automatic restore to that machine or any other. It is offered on XP only as Microsoft has dropped support of Windows ME, Windows98, and earlier operating systems. It does not backup your applications, however as the Acronis package above does. The cost is \$50 per year no matter how much storage you use, up to 40 gigabytes (most people in Quail Run use about 5 gigabytes). I have not tried it but on paper it looks good and it has gotten good reviews.

A new scam using phony jury duty

Most of us take a summons for jury duty seriously, but enough people skip out on their civic duty that a new and ominous kind of scam has surfaced. Fall for it and your identity could be stolen. In this con, someone calls pretending to be a court official who threateningly says a warrant has been issued for your arrest because you didn't show up

for jury duty. The caller claims to be a jury coordinator. If you protest that you never received a summons for jury duty, the scammer asks you for your Social Security number and date of birth so he or she can verify the information and cancel the arrest warrant. Give out any of this information and bingo! Your identity just got stolen. The scam has been reported so far in 10 states, including Michigan, Ohio, Texas, Arizona, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado . This (scam) is particularly insidious because they use intimidation over the phone to try to bully people into giving information by pretending they're with the court system. The FBI and the federal court system have issued nationwide alerts on their web sites, warning consumers about the fraud.

For more information see: <http://www.snopes.com/crime/fraud/juryduty.asp> .

Thanks to Ken Mudgett for this forward.