

TIPS FOR BETTER WI-FI

Wireless (Wi-Fi) has become the standard Internet connection in many households, connecting to laptops, tablets, smartphones, smart TV's, thermostats, cameras, game systems, and more! But Wi-Fi as a technology isn't quite as good as you might think (expect). Here are some common issues and solutions for Wi-Fi:

Internet Speed - Behind every Internet connection is the speed. The devices in your home can only share what is coming into the router so it's important to have a speed that matches your needs.

Distance + Interference - Wi-Fi loses speed fairly quickly as the distance and number of obstacles in the path increases. Signal does go through some doors, floors and walls but eventually, the signal just doesn't reach or is too slow for the application. Fluorescent lights, appliances, electrical outlets and power cords can interfere with the signal, adding another complication.

Connected Devices - Your devices, being on the other end of the Wi-Fi communication, can also contribute to a performance lag. The Wi-Fi antenna and electronics in your device may not perform the same and its power output may vary (e.g. a smartphone does not send back to the router at the same power the router sent to it). Also, any older devices (using the "G" wireless standard) can affect the performance of other devices in your house as the router needs to slow down to talk to it and cannot hop to the next device as quickly.

Technology - Wi-Fi is really convenient and has gotten much better over the years, but it simply is not as fast or as reliable as a wired connection - which has a solid and nearly interference-free path. Another aspect that affects wired and wireless connections is the way the Internet and your router will always use as much bandwidth as it can. Somebody downloading a large file or a computer doing updates may affect other devices using the Internet at the same time, regardless of bandwidth, because it wants to use 100% of the bandwidth until the download is finished.

What you can do:

- 1) Start with the right Internet connection for your needs (consider # of devices, applications, and wireless loss)
- 2) Place the router as close to the areas you would like coverage; place up high if possible
- 3) Replace or remove any older devices that might slow down your network for the rest of your devices
- 4) Add wireless access points to extend your signal to keep the wireless speed loss to a minimum
- 5) Connect stationary and speed-critical devices with a wired ethernet connection
- 6) Schedule max-bandwidth applications (downloads, updates) for minimal interference with other devices/users

"We had TCC for our cable and Internet. We added TCC phone service at our home and our business and it saved us money over what we were paying. Kim also looked at our cellular plan and found a plan that met our needs better and saved us money. We appreciate the time and personal attention we get from TCC." - Customer from Blair

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Jeff Van Pelt - I started working for WWCC in 1981 as a technician. The last 10 years, I have transitioned into the office as a Dispatcher/Customer Service Rep. In my spare time I enjoy a good concert, kicking back at a sporting event, working around the house and spending time with family.



2017 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The 2017 TCC Annual Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2017 at Ss Peter & Paul Parochial School on Highway 93 in Independence. In 2017 there are two (2) board positions up for election. Each Director serves a four (4) year term. Board members listed below are currently serving and are running again for these positions:

Arcadia District – Christine Howard
Osseo-Fairchild District – Kathleen Sieg



Individuals interested in running for the Board in the above mentioned districts should contact Cheryl Rue, CEO, at 715-695-2691 or crue@tccpro.net. All inquiries will be kept confidential. We hope you can attend the 2017 Annual Membership Meeting!

GET THE FULL POTENTIAL FROM YOUR CONNECTED DEVICES

To get the full potential from your Internet devices, you need to start off with the RIGHT SPEED! More data than ever is packed into web pages, video streams and online games. Plus, households have more devices sharing their Internet connection. Without the right speed, your devices aren't able to work properly. Here are some general speed requirements for common applications:

- Video streaming (Netflix) 6 - 10* Mbps (*25 Mbps on 4K HD)
- Web surfing / Facebook 4 - 7 Mbps
- Gaming (XBOX, PS, etc.) 2 - 5 Mbps
- Streaming music (Pandora, Spotify) 1 - 3 Mbps
- Large file downloading 20+ Mbps (the faster, the better!)

Consider how many streams/devices will be used together and add 30% more to account for wireless signal loss** to get a good estimate of the speed your household needs.

** See article on the back page "Tips For Better Wi-Fi"





www.ntca.org/smart

TRI-COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE

WWW.TCCPRO.NET 800.831.0610 



▼ Strum & Independence
Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

▼ Galesville Location
Wednesday Noon - 4 p.m.
Thursday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

▼ Strum Office
417 5th Ave. N
P.O. Box 578
Strum, WI 54770
715-695-2691

▼ Independence Office
23669 Washington St.
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INTERNET FLASHBACK

When you look back at the early web browsers and the standard method of connection (dial-up), you realize how much the Internet has changed and evolved. Anybody remember the first mainstream web browser "Netscape Navigator," or the first version of Microsoft's Internet Explorer, which came after Netscape? Or, do you remember the screeches and squeals of a dial-up modem connecting to the Internet? Remember when 56k was fast? We have come a long way in connectivity, speed and content. It will be exciting to see what's next in the world of technology!



SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO 2017 SENIORS

Tri-County Communications Cooperative, Inc. will again offer scholarships to 2017 High School graduates who plan to further their education at a Technical College or University. Twenty-Five lucky graduates will receive \$500 scholarships in a random drawing. The drawing will be conducted in February, scholarship recipients will be notified in writing and will be presented at our Annual Membership Meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2017 at Ss Peter & Paul Parochial School, Independence. Completed TCC scholarship applications need to be received by TCC no later than Wednesday, February 1, 2017. To be eligible to receive a scholarship, the following conditions must be met:

1. The parents, guardians, or foster parents of the recipients must reside in the Tri-County Communications Cooperative's service area and be a member of the Cooperative.
2. The recipients must complete the first semester of the 2017-2018 school year with a passing grade and commence the second semester before being eligible for payment from the Cooperative.
3. Applicant must provide a senior picture to be used in TCC Newsletter, if selected for scholarship.
4. Attendance at Annual Meeting is strongly encouraged. Recipients that attend TCC's Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at Ss Peter & Paul Parochial School in Independence will receive a special gift.

In addition, TCC is a participant in the scholarship from the **Foundation for Rural Service (FRS)**. Established in 1994, FRS, in cooperation with NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association, seeks to sustain and enhance the quality of life throughout rural America by advancing an understanding of rural telecommunications issues. Should a student from our service area be selected to receive one of the \$2,000 scholarships, we will contribute an additional \$500 to the scholarship bringing the total one-time scholarship award to \$2,500. Completed FRS applications need to be received by TCC no later than February 24, 2017, as each application must be signed by our CEO.

Both the TCC and the FRS scholarship applications can be found on our website: <http://www.tccpro.net>. Click (or touch) the link for **"Scholarships"** under the slideshow to view/download the PDF file.

10 TIPS TO PREVENT PHISHING ATTACKS

"Phishing" -- To deceptively portray an organization via email to cause a specific action/reaction or gain information.

1. **Learn to Identify Suspected Phishing Emails:** Phishing attacks (a) duplicate the image, logo, name, brand, or behavior of a real company; (b) include web/email addresses that are visually similar to a real business; and (c) offer promotions or threaten the loss of an existing account.
2. **Consider The Request In The Email:** Your bank will never ask you to send your passwords or personal information by email. Never respond to these requests, and if you have the slightest doubt, call your bank directly for clarification.
3. **Never Use The Links In The Email:** Do not click on hyperlinks or links in the email, as it might direct you to a fraudulent website. Type in the URL directly into your browser or use bookmarks / favorites if you have them stored.
4. **Have A Good Security Program On Your Computer:** An antivirus program can prevent you from going to an infected or fraudulent website if you do click a link from a phishing email.
5. **Enter Your Sensitive Data in Secure Websites Only:** In order for a site to be 'safe', it must begin with 'https:// ' and your browser should show an icon of a closed lock in the corner.
6. **Periodically Check Your Accounts:** Check your bank accounts regularly for any irregularities in your transactions.
7. **Phishing Attacks Don't Just Use Banks:** They can portray banks, airlines, municipalities, pizza parlors and more!
8. **Pay Attention To Language/Grammar:** Phishing emails can be in any language but they often have bad grammar, spelling and word usage. If it seems "phishy", it probably is!
9. **Have the Slightest Doubt, Do Not Risk It:** The best way to prevent phishing is to consistently reject any email or news that asks you to provide confidential data. Delete these emails and call your bank to clarify any doubts.
10. **Stay Current:** Check with TCC or tech news to learn about any new, recurring and changing threats

These tips were also posted to our Facebook page. Like us on Facebook to get helpful tips like this!

RESTRICT UNWANTED TELEPHONE SOLICITATIONS

In 2003, the Do-Not-Call Act was signed into law. This legislation allowed for the establishment and enforcement of a national Do-Not-Call Registry giving consumers a choice regarding telemarketing calls. If your number is listed on the registry, all commercial telemarketers, except for businesses with whom you have an existing relationship or certain non-profit and political organizations, are not allowed to call you.

Consumers may register their residential telephone number, including wireless numbers, on the national Do-Not-Call Registry by telephone or by Internet at no cost. To register by telephone, consumers may call 1-888-382-1222. For TTY, call 1-866-290-4236. You must call from the phone number you wish to register. You can register on-line for the national Do-Not-Call Registry via the internet at www.donotcall.gov. Inclusion of your telephone number on the national Do-Not-Call Registry will be effective 31 days after registration. Your number will remain on the registry permanently. You are allowed to remove your number from the registry at any time. If you continue to receive telemarketing sales calls or robocalls, you can file a complaint by visiting www.donotcall.gov, or by calling 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236).