Radio Days – 2010-11-13

Tip of the Week – Who Did What?

In the last few weeks I have had a number of calls from people whose computers do not do what they want them to do. One person had an email program which would not send or receive emails. This problem was easy to solve because they had internet access: this meant that the problem was in the settings in the email program itself. Sure enough, the person who had setup the email program had used common settings. These settings, unfortunately, were not correct and the emails did not come or go. A quick check on the ISP's website showed the correct settings, and the emails flooded in once the correct settings were in place.

In the other case the entries for their accounting program had been made badly and all their reports were now wrong. The bank account had, supposedly, been reconciled (all transactions had been checked) but many transactions were wrong and others duplicated. Fixing these errors corrected the reports, and the client was then able to continue entering transactions.

The moral of this story is to check out the person who does the work on your computer just as you check out every other person who does work for you. Would you trust the car which takes your children to school to just anybody? Please take the same care when getting computer support.

Helping Your Helper

Phone calls seem to come in cycles. This week I have had a number of people ring me to say that something would not work. This is the usual reason for people ringing me so I am used to that. What I find frustrating is the response I get when I ask what error message the caller has. The inevitable result is something like "I cannot get on the internet". As this can have a number of causes we are both no further advanced and, because the internet is not working I cannot use CrossLoop to help them from afar.

The most recent call that I had was from a client who rang for the second time in two days stating that he could not get his emails from HotMail. As I had fixed just this problem the day before I was sure that the problem was with my client: how wrong I was! Sure enough, he could not get onto HotMail to get his emails. After some digging I discovered that he was right: he could not get onto the internet. After checking that all the lights on the modem were lit I did all the standard things: I switched his computer and modem off then removed the power cords. After the standard minute I switched everything back on and again found that the internet did not work.

The problem was with his ISP (Internet Service Provider), and a call to technical support let us know that there were intermittent problems which they were working to resolve. At this stage I sat my client down and showed him how to log onto HotMail. He had been using only part of his login so I showed him how to use the full login and the full password, and told him that, if it happened again, he could either ring his ISP or wait until the problem was resolved.

Sometimes problems are so easy to fix that they are not really problems (although they really do frustrate the "owner" of the problem). At other times the problem is so severe that it takes some days to fix. To help you helper help you please be in front of your computer with the problem report visible on the screen so that you can read it to your support person and they can then get a better idea of just what is wrong.

Further Information

CrossLoop   www.crossloop.com