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North Central Kansas Community Network
Together with Cunningham Cable Co.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Hello NCKCN internet members

It's July and it's time to celebrate! Here are a few items to add to your list of things to celebrate: our nation's freedom, drive-in movie theaters, modernized lawnmowers, reality TV shows, and summer. (See details below.) We hope you will take some time out of your busy summer to enjoy our eNewsletter.

The goal of each of our monthly eNewsletters is to keep our subscribers informed regarding their Internet connection and to improve their Internet experience. To meet this goal, each monthly newsletter will usually contain information related to:

1. Warnings on a recent virus, e-mail hoax or security issue that may affect you
2. An update on new services and other local interests
3. An answer to a frequently asked Internet related question
4. Some fun, seasonal websites to check out
5. A short, step-by-step tutorial on an e-mail or browser related task

We think you'll find the information contained in this newsletter to be a valuable tool for enhancing your Internet experience. If, however, you'd prefer not to receive these bulletins on a monthly basis, click HERE.

To see what's inside this issue, take a look at the index to the left and thanks for reading!

- The NCKCN Team

P2P Dangers - File Sharing Can Compromise Your Computer's Security

Peer-to-peer file-sharing programs appear to be a godsend: they allow you to swap digital files with others who have the same file-sharing software. Thousands of people use peer-to-peer (often called P2P) programs to exchange music, videos, movies, games, and software. But P2P programs are seemingly synonymous with trouble.

First, there are the well-publicized copyright infringement issues that arose when Napster, the first widely used P2P program for exchanging music files, became wildly popular in the late 1990s. Other examples of P2P programs are Kazaa, Morpheus, eDonkey, and Gnutella.

Less well-known, but perhaps more significant, is how using P2P programs can expose your computer to viruses, worms, Trojan horses, adware, and spyware, and even expose you to identity theft and fraud. How can these things happen? A P2P network allows users with the same file-sharing program to access files stored on each other's computers without the typical network interaction with file servers. This makes file sharing quick and easy, but these are unsecured Internet connections unprotected by firewalls, making them prime targets for hackers and virus writers.

It's easy for virus writers to attach malicious code to an innocently titled file that resides on a file-sharing network. In fact, the infamous MyDoom virus that wreaked havoc on e-mail systems worldwide in 2004 was initially spread in this way by unknowing users of the Kazaa file-sharing program.

The same goes for adware and spyware. These unwanted programs could be attached to an otherwise useful file downloaded from a file-sharing network, exposing you to a flood of unwanted spam, ad pop-up windows, and web browser hijackings.

Even worse, a skilled hacker can gain access to your entire hard drive through a file-sharing network, exposing you to identity theft and fraud. A hacker can do this by using access to the files you intend to share on the file-sharing network to gain access to personal files not intended for public use. If you have information such as Social Security numbers and credit card information on your computer, the potential for identity theft and fraud is very real.

Here's how to protect yourself on P2P networks:

- **Be legal.** The easiest way to avoid being exploited is to avoid P2P networks altogether. But if file sharing is important to you, make sure you only use file-sharing networks and programs in which you have the copyright owners' permission to buy and exchange the files. Not only will you avoid violating copyright law, but legitimate file-sharing networks should be more secure and far less likely to attach adware or spyware to their files.

- **The fine print.** When you install P2P software, read the software's End User License Agreement (EULA) before you agree to install it. Don't install software whose legalese contains questionable phrases such as "from time to time," "we may make your information available to third parties," and "you agree to allow third-party software to be installed into your computer."

- **Access denied.** If you legally buy digital files, reject any offers for software that will enable others to access your files. This will help block hackers who want to snoop on your hard drive.

- **Software protection.** Regardless of whether you use a P2P network, you should be running a firewall, up-to-date antivirus software, and spyware and adware blockers and scanners.

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Ask The Help Desk - Why Is My Computer Screen Wallpaper Distorted?

Question: Sometimes I save images off the Internet for wallpaper on my computer screen. However, the images I save quite often look very distorted when I stretch them to full screen. How can I avoid this?

Answer: You are probably running into a couple of problems. The first is that of proportions. If the image you are grabbing from the Web isn't proportional to your screen, it will look distorted when it's stretched. Remember, your screen format is rectangular having horizontal and vertical dimensions. So if you save an image that is much more vertical than horizontal, the image will look "fat" once it is fitted to your screen.

The other problem is that most images found on the Web are not a high enough resolution to be used for wallpaper. Many computers, for example, are set to a resolution of either 800x600 pixels or 1024x768 pixels. When grabbing an image off the Web, the image needs to be close to the same size as the resolution found on your screen in order to appear undistorted. If the image is only 250x100 pixels, for example, there just won't be enough pixels to fill your computer screen in an undistorted manner, unless of course you are using a very small screen.

Note that most site owners have copyright restrictions regarding their site's content (text and images) so you must first get permission before grabbing an image to use as computer screen wallpaper.

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Great Sites To Check Out This Month

Head To A Drive-In Movie Theater This Summer
http://DriveInTheater.com - Do you remember the fun times you had going to the drive-in movie theater on weekends with your

family or friends? There were over 5,000 drive-in movie theaters located across the U.S. and Canada back in 1958. Today there are less than 600 left in North America but they are still great fun. Check out the site's database listing of drive-in theaters and then treat your family to a night of old-fashioned fun while vacationing this summer. The kids will love the experience and so will you.

Visit A Lawnmower Museum

http://lawnmowerworld.co.uk/ - Those of you who are really into lawnmowers have probably already got this site bookmarked. For everyone else, this is the link to the British Lawnmower Museum. Yes, an actual museum dedicated to nothing but lawnmowers. Check out the "Gallery" section for interesting pictures of antique cutting contraptions. It'll make you appreciate the improvements that have been made in lawn mowing technology since the early twentieth century.

Calculating Your Social Security Benefits

http://www.SocialSecurity.gov - There's been much debate regarding the long-term solvency of our Social Security System. Most agree that the funds will be depleted at some point in the future because of the changing ratio in the number of people working versus the number of people retiring. If you have not yet retired, have you ever figured out what you can expect in monthly social security income based on the current system? SocialSecurity.gov can calculate this for you. Simply go to the "Calculate your benefits" link and enter the requested information.

Sign The Declaration of Independence

http://archives.gov/national_archives_experience/charters/declaration.html - The U.S. National Archives & Records Administration restores and archives important government documents from our nation's history. Celebrating the anniversary of our declaration of independence during the month of July provides a great opportunity to see and learn more about our historical treasures. Go to the Declaration of Independence area of this site and click on the "Join the Signers of the Declaration" link. There you can add your name to the ranks of the 56 original signers who stood for freedom and then print off your copy to show friends and family.

The Cut - The Next Hit Reality TV Show

http://cbs.com/primetime/the_cut/ - The new CBS TV show *The Cut* appears to be the next hit reality TV series. During each weekly episode, clothing designer Tommy Hilfiger pits fashion-savvy contestants against one another in real fashion world challenges to find the next great trend setting designer. One contestant is eliminated each week. For more information about the contestants, each episode, and some behind-the-scenes drama, head to this site.

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Short Tutorial - Images Saved On Your Computer Screen As Repeated "Tiles"

As the FAQ in the "Ask The Help Desk" section above explains, it can be difficult to grab images off the Web to use as wallpaper without the images appearing distorted on your computer screen. Rather than trying to stretch pictures to fit your computer's screen, an alternative is to "tile" your selected image. This process saves the picture repeatedly in rows on your screen as a background. The result may be cluttered but probably preferable to the distorted alternative.

To tile an image as your screen's wallpaper **when using a PC and Internet Explorer** as your browser, simply right-click on the chosen picture and select "Set As Background."

If you are on a PC and using the new Firefox browser, right-click on the image and choose "Set As Wallpaper." When the "Set Wallpaper" dialog box appears, look for the "Position" menu. It will list "Stretch," "Tile," or "Center" as options. Choose "Tile" from the list. Click on the "Set Wallpaper" button. The background of your computer screen will change to multiple rows of the picture you selected.

If you get tired of using this image, right-click on your PC's desktop and choose "Properties." With the "Desktop" tab selected, choose the wallpaper you want from the list that appears. Click "Apply" and then click "OK." (This works whether using Internet Explorer or Firefox as your browser.)

If you are using a **Macintosh running OS X**, right-click your cursor arrow on the image (if you have a two button mouse) or click on the image while holding down the "ctrl" key (if you have a single button mouse) and select "Download Image To Disk." Next,

go to the Apple menu then drop down to and select "System Preferences..." Click on the Desktop & Screensaver icon and click on "Choose Folder" in the left hand pane of the window. Click on "Desktop." The picture you downloaded to disk should be there. Click on it to select it and then click on "Choose." Next to the preview picture you'll see a button that says "Fill Screen." Click on it and four choices will appear: "Fill Screen," "Stretch to fill screen," "Center," and "Tile." Choose "Tile" and then close the window.

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We hope you found this newsletter to be informative. It's our way of keeping you posted on the happenings at our shop. If, however, you'd prefer not to receive these bulletins on a monthly basis, click HERE.

Thanks for your business!

Thank You,

The Staff at NCKCN

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