



the
talk
of Bloomer

SUMMER WRAP-UP & FALL FIBER

Bloomer Telephone has had a busy summer! All of our new fiber optic cable has been installed. Our contractor expects to finish burying all of the fiber optic drops by November. We have received the electronics and have started the process of converting customers to the new system. I want to thank everyone for their patience and understanding as the project

has progressed. I know you will be pleased with the results!

I need to mention a couple of other important developments that affect our customers: The FCC has issued new rules regarding how we handle your private information, such as toll records and billing information. While

we have never experienced a problem in Bloomer, you may have seen cases of large companies providing information to imposters. Please review our "Protecting your Privacy..." article in this newsletter for details about what the new rules are and how they may impact us.

Another important issue is the potential exhaust of our 715 area code. (See article on page 2.) While not projected to occur until 2009, the Public Service Commission held hearings in September to determine what should be done. Depending on the method they choose to implement the areacode split, there could be a significant impact on you.

With the completion of our new fiber optic system, we expect to be able to offer exciting new services. We'll be getting the word out in a variety of ways, so please watch for future announcements.



Jim Smart, General Manager

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Five Great Websites for Students

Teach your children how to surf for credible sources on the Internet

– Adapted from an article in Microsoft Home Magazine by Marc Saltzman

If you want to see a blank look on a student's face, ask him about the Dewey Decimal library classification system. For better or for worse, the Internet often becomes an alternative to a library's card catalogs. But how can you trust what you read on the Web?

"Frankly, this is my main concern, along with stumbling onto inappropriate material," admits Bonnie Marks, a mother of two. "Just because someone publishes something on their home page, it doesn't make it gospel – many kids don't know this."

Learning where to go and how to appropriately use information that is on the Internet can be challenging to both parents and students. The following is a look at some of the most comprehensive – and reliable – educational Web sites a student can bookmark and use to research school projects and homework assignments.

Refdesk <http://www.refdesk.com>

Since 1995, Refdesk.com, which stands for "reference desk," has served as a one-click springboard to many of the Web's top dictionaries, encyclopedias, calculators, atlases, news headlines, and search engines. The site also includes a handy "homework helper" section that provides help in all subjects to students in every grade.

HowStuffWorks <http://www.howstuffworks.com>

Ever wanted to know why earthquakes happen? How CD burners work? What the sun is made of? These questions, and a large amount of others related to computers/electronics, automobiles, science, entertainment, and people, are all answered at this award-winning Web site. Simply type a query into the search window or peruse the topics by category. Extras include free newsletters, surveys, and printable versions of all answers.

Novelguide.com <http://novelguide.com>

The Web's answer to those black- and yellow-striped Cliff Notes is Novelguide.com, a reliable and free source for literary analysis of classic and contemporary books such as Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Notes from*

The PSC will consider either a geographic split or an overlay. With a geographic split, the geographic area served by an existing area code is split into two smaller areas. One of the sections will retain the existing area code while the other section will receive a new area code. In Wisconsin, the current 262 and 920 area codes were created when the 414 area code was split on two previous occasions. With a geographic split, 7-digit dialing is retained for most local calls but about half the current 715 customers will need to change their area code.

With an overlay, a new area code is introduced within the same geographic region as the area code that is exhausting. All current customers will keep their current area code and telephone number. However, because both area codes reside within the same geographic area, all local calls must be dialed using the area code and the 7-digit telephone number (10-digit dialing). This 10-digit dialing requirement is mandated by the Federal Communications Commission.

The decision for the PSC is not whether to implement area code relief (a new area code must be introduced once an area code approaches exhaust), but how to implement it.

At the time of this newsletter printing, the PSC had not made a decision on the method for making the 715 split. When the 715 split method is settled and the dates are set for completing the split, Bloomer Telephone will be sure to give our customers plenty of notice in accordance with the PSC regulations.

– Adapted from PSC.wi.gov.

the Underground. The site offers character profiles, metaphor and theme analysis, and author biographies.

Math.com <http://www.math.com>

This site provides help in a number of mathematics-related subjects, including basic grade-school math, calculus, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and statistics. Practice exercises are automatically graded, plus this free site also features a glossary, calculators, homework tips, math games, and lesson plans for teachers.

Science Made Simple <http://scienemadesimple.com>

Science classes—including the ubiquitous science project—aren't as easy for some to grasp as for others. At Science Made Simple, kids of all ages can get detailed answers to many of science's questions, read current news articles related to science, get ideas on school projects, and take advantage of unit conversion tables. Users can also find out if their school's textbooks pass the test.

715 Area Code Split

According to the most recent projections, the 715 area code is expected to run out of telephone number prefixes (the 1st 3 digits of a 7-digit phone number) by the end of 2009.

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) is currently investigating relief alternatives for the 715 area code. Area code relief involves adding a new area code in all or part of the area served by an existing area code that is running out of telephone numbers.

Top 10 Considerations for upgrading and installing Windows Vista:

Adapted from a web article at techrepublic.com

Microsoft has created two distinct hardware classifications for PC manufacturers to use for their new systems. A PC can be either "Vista Capable" or "Premium Ready." The standard Vista Capable machines have more scaled down hardware requirements than the Premium Ready machines. Other than being cheaper and a bit slower than their beefy Premium Ready siblings, the biggest difference between the two systems is that Vista Capable machines can't use the exciting new Aero Glass graphics.

Here are 10 factors to address as you prepare your existing computers to run Windows Vista. Many of the hardware requirements are surprisingly easy to meet, despite the demands of the operating system. The biggest hurdle to run Windows Vista will be the graphics card requirement, although this requirement is less stringent if you don't plan to use the new Aero Glass graphics. In general, a majority of existing PCs will be fully capable of running Windows Vista with standard 2-D graphics. It may not be as pleasing to the eye, but it's likely to be pleasing to your pocket book.

#1: Analyze your machine for upgrade readiness

Before doing anything else, you should download and run the Windows Upgrade Advisor utility. A quick search on the Microsoft web site will take you to the link. This software will examine your computer and provide you with a summary of what versions of Windows Vista the computer is capable of running. Note that the Upgrade Advisor only indicates whether or not the PC will run Windows Vista. It does not indicate which requirements the PC doesn't meet.

#2: Check the CPU

To be considered Vista Capable, the computer must have a CPU of at least 800 MHz. Those that are Premium Ready require a processor of at least 1 GHz. A large majority of computers that have been sold in recent years will meet this requirement with ease.

#3: Make sure you have enough memory

To be considered Vista Capable, the PC must have at least 512 MB of RAM. Premium Ready machines must have a minimum of 1 GB of system RAM. Most modern PCs will either meet this requirement or be capable of a relatively inexpensive upgrade.

#4: Evaluate your graphics adapter

Those of you looking forward to the new 3-D Aero Glass graphics will need to make sure that your graphics adapter is DirectX 9 capable. WDDM (a Windows display driver model for writing drivers) compatibility is also recommended. To be considered Premium Ready, the graphics adapter must have a minimum of 128 MB of video RAM. Vista Capable cards require only 64 MB of video RAM. Unless you plan on using the Aero Glass graphics, there is no reason to upgrade your existing video adapter if it's Vista Capable.

#5: Verify that you have sufficient hard drive space

With hard drive capacity constantly increasing, available space is usually not a major concern. However, you should still be aware of the minimum space requirements for Windows Vista and take a moment to verify that your system has enough free space. To install Windows Vista, the hard drive must be at least 40 GB in size and have a minimum of 15 GB of free space.

#6: Make sure you've got a DVD drive

Windows Vista ships on a DVD, so to install the new operating system, the computer must have a DVD drive. This is another requirement that should be fairly easy to meet, since DVD drives have become commonplace or require only a fairly inexpensive upgrade.

#7: Sort out the versions

Determining which version of Windows Vista to install can be a bit more complex than it was with previous versions of Windows. Windows Vista will have five editions:

***Windows Vista Home Basic.** This version of Vista provides basic operating system functionality. If you don't need advanced features, such as Aero Glass, this is the choice for you. Average home users will choose this version, although stepping up to Windows Vista Home Premium will offer more functionality.*

***Windows Vista Home Premium.** This version is sort of a cross between Windows XP Home and Windows XP Professional. It offers much more functionality than the Vista Home Basic edition and is probably the version that most average to advanced home users will install.*

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We Need Your Help in Protecting Your Privacy

CUSTOMER INFORMATION NOTICE

Bloomer Telephone will be adopting new Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI) regulations, as mandated by the Federal Communications Commission, (FCC). These rules are designed to protect your information. The CPNI rules require that we obtain verification of your identity before we discuss your account information. That means we can't give out any

personal customer information to anyone but the account holder or someone authorized in writing. So please understand that even though we may know many of you personally, we are following the strict rules of the account verification process to protect your information.

Vista: Top 10 Considerations

Continued from page 3.

Windows Vista Business. This version is comparable to Windows XP Professional. It offers standard business functionality and will be a staple on the corporate desktop.

Windows Vista Enterprise. The Vista Enterprise version offers advanced functionality such as BitLocker Drive Encryption for laptops, application compatibility tools, and multi-language support.

Windows Vista Ultimate. The Vista Ultimate version combines the best of the home and business editions into one feature-rich operating system. This version also includes the Windows Media Center.

#8: Check application compatibility

To make your Windows Vista installation go as smoothly as possible, you should ensure that your existing applications will run under Vista before installing it. You can download and run

the Application Compatibility Toolkit (use the search feature on Microsoft.com to find this link) to help you identify applications that may not run under Windows Vista.

#9: Don't overlook data backups

Backing up your data is one of the most critical steps in upgrading your operating system. Unfortunately, this step is often overlooked in the excitement of installing the latest operating system. In addition to backing up your data, it's best to verify that you have all of the installation media from your existing software and the appropriate licensing information before you start the installation.

#10: Remember the notebooks

Notebook computers must meet all of the same hardware specifications as desktop PCs. The one problem with notebooks, however, is that if the graphics card isn't compatible, there is little that you can do to upgrade the system.