

The Connection

AUGUST 2021

Get Convenient Answers to Tech Questions

From time to time, you'll probably have questions related to your Runestone Telecom services. For example, you may wonder how to set up an eBill account, what to do first if your Internet goes down, or which number to call for tech support.

You'll find the answers on our website at www.runestone.net. It features helpful content whenever you need it.



Contact Us

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Visit Us: www.runestone.net



OUR INTERNET SERVICE OPENS UP A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

As this school year begins, let's celebrate old friends reunited in the classroom and new possibilities explored at home.

With our super-fast Internet, your household has access to virtually unlimited ways to learn. Virtual reality (VR) headsets and apps can transport your children to outer space, take them on safari, or make them feel like they're inside a famous painting. Social media builds connections and inspires creativity, and streaming videos offer lessons on any subject.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT RUNESTONE.NET TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CURRENT INTERNET SPEEDS AND PRICING.



August 19 is National Potato Day

Potatoes are definitely America's favorite vegetable. Each year we consume about 110 pounds of potatoes per person. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that potatoes have a holiday in their honor.

In preparation for National Potato Day, we've dug up this trivia for you:

- People in Shakespeare's time viewed the potato as an aphrodisiac and labeled them "Apples of Love."
- During the 18th century, potatoes were served as a dessert, hot and salted, in a napkin.
- The Irish are perhaps best known for their love of potatoes. At one time Ireland was so dependent upon potatoes that when the potato crops were destroyed by blight in 1845 and 1846, over one million people died and another million left Ireland to find food.
- The potato chip was invented in 1853 and has been America's number one snack food for more than 50 years.

While we're on the subject of spuds, here's a message for all of you who enjoy being couch potatoes. Runestone Telecom offers the high-speed Internet you need to stream movies and TV series without the annoyance of buffering. Call 320-986-2013 to learn more.

How to Avoid a QR Code Scam

QR codes, which stand for "Quick Response" or "Quick Read," have been around awhile. You're used to seeing these matrix bar codes in magazine ads and brochures, as well as on posters, product packaging, and tourist attraction signage. But something new has arrived—the scam of QR code clickjacking.

Scammers are now using stickers to place their own QR codes on top of legitimate ones. This is especially common in public places like airports, train stations, and bus depots, where the QR codes are purposely placed in an accessible place so people can use them easily. This plays into the hands of the scammers, because it also makes them easy to cover with their own stickers.

Victims who scan the fake QR codes are directed to malicious websites and prompted to provide personally identifiable information (PII), which can be used for identity theft. Or victims could have malware directly downloaded to their smartphones and lose money through online banking fraud.



According to Scambusters, here's what you should do to avoid becoming the victim of a QR code scam:

- Never scan a code box that doesn't appear to be linked to anything else and has no accompanying text—for example, just stuck on a wall or floor.
- Be wary of scanning codes in public places, such as transportation depots, bus stops, or city centers.
- Check first to see if a code is on a removable sticker. If so, don't scan.
- If you scan a code and find yourself on a webpage that asks for PII such as passwords, don't key in the information. Finding out details on a product is not important enough to take the chance on being scammed. You can always investigate the product later.
- Use a secure QR reader app that checks the website the QR code is directing you to before it takes you there.

Used by legitimate businesses, QR codes are a convenient information portal. But used by scammers, they can become a fraud gateway. Slow down and watch for warning signs before you act.

Watch Out for Computer Vision Syndrome

As a child, you may have been warned by your parents not to sit too close to the TV because it would hurt your eyes. These days, we're spending more time than ever in front of a screen, since computers, smartphones, and tablets have been added to the mix.

Continuous or prolonged use of technology can lead to computer vision syndrome, which may include eye strain, headaches, fatigue, burning or tired eyes, loss of focus, blurred vision, double vision, or head/neck pain.



The American Optometric Association (AOA) recommends implementing a 20-20-20 rule with technology — take a 20-second break every 20 minutes and look at something 20 feet away. Staring off into the distance helps the eyes from locking into a close-up position. The AOA also advises people to do the following:

- Keep the computer screen 15 to 20 degrees below eye level (about 4 or 5 inches as measured from the center of the screen) and 20 to 28 inches away from the eyes.
- Avoid glare. If needed, turn the desk or computer to prevent glare on the screen.
- Reduce the amount of light in the room to match the computer screen.
- Blink frequently. It will keep the front surface of the eye moist.

Of course, taking steps to prevent computer vision syndrome is just one aspect of managing your eye health. Another is to regularly schedule a comprehensive eye exam, which can detect eye diseases and conditions in their early stages. August is National Eye Exam Month, so this is a great reminder to make an appointment for you and/or family members if needed.



Clay Drews Retires

Clay Drews, Internet Manager at Runestone Telecom, retired on July 30th after 25 years of service. We wish you a happy and relaxing retirement, Clay, and we'll miss seeing your friendly face at the office every day!

New Members

Barrett

Fleischfresser, Barb 320-528-2562

Elbow Lake

Casad, R J Dr..... 218-685-4107

Christenson, Odell

& Mary 218-685-2267

Fossell, Theresa 218-685-3110

Michael, Lorraine..... 218-685-5050

Westrom, Myron

& Alice 218-685-5464

Herman

Olson, Tim

& Shannon 320-378-0184

Hoffman

Norms Tire and

Auto Sales 320-986-2686

Get ready for
**10-DIGIT
DIALING**
for local calls



In July 2020, the Federal Communications Commission adopted an order approving the designation of 988 as the 3-digit dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. To facilitate implementation, area codes across the country where the 988 prefix is a working prefix and which now use 7-digit local dialing must transition to 10-digit local dialing. This includes the 218 & 320 area codes in our service area.

Starting October 24, 2021, you'll need to dial the 218 or 320 area code, plus the 7-digit phone number to make local calls. In addition to changing your dialing routine, you'll also have to reprogram 7-digit local numbers to 10-digit numbers if you use speed dial or any other system that automatically makes calls for you.

For more details, call us at 320-986-2013.



You'll Automatically Appreciate the Benefits of AutoPay

There are many household things we need to remember to do on a regular basis, from watering the houseplants to changing the furnace filter. Wouldn't it be nice to scratch one thing off that "to do" list? That's what happens with AutoPay from Runestone Telecom.

Once you set up AutoPay, you can simply forget about it. Your Runestone Telecom bill payment will be automatically debited from your bank account or charged to your credit/debit card on the 20th of each month, without you having to do a thing. It's the easiest way to make sure your payment is made on time, every time—even when you're traveling or busy with other activities. In other words, AutoPay lets you forget about bill paying and remember to enjoy life.

For more details about AutoPay, and to start enjoying its convenience, visit www.runestone.net or call 320-986-2013. AutoPay setup is quick and easy.

Managing Screen Time and Maintaining a Balance

How much screen time is too much for children? And what's the best way to balance the benefits of screen time with the problems it can potentially cause? The answers will vary from family to family, and even day to day, based on careful consideration of several factors.

One of those factors is that screen time is a sedentary activity. When children are glued to the screen watching a TV show or playing games on a tablet, they're not being physically active, and physical activity is a critical part of health. So it's important to make sure children put down their devices each day and get some form of exercise—outside in the fresh air if possible.

Another consideration is the type of content children are engaging with during screen time. Without parental controls and guidance, children can be exposed to concerning content such as violence, negative stereotypes, inaccurate information, or cyberbully messages. This can lead to issues including trouble sleeping, anxiety, depression, and poor self-image.

Beyond setting a defined limit of screen time hours allowed for each child depending on age, your family can take other steps to reduce screen time and its negative impacts:

- Turn off screens during family meals.
- Avoid using screens to stop temper tantrums.
- Prioritize quality content, like educational programs or a live camera at a local zoo.
- Shut off screens 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime to foster better sleep.
- Be a role model for your children by limiting your own screen time.
- Understand and use the parental controls available with your household's devices.
- Talk to your children about online threats and how to stay safe.

When managed well, screen time can also be beneficial to children. It can connect them to a range of educational opportunities, teach them new skills, enable them to stay in touch with friends and family, and provide much-needed ways to relax. Finding the right balance between screen time and other activities is key.

You can create a Personalized Family Media Use Plan with help from the American Academy of Pediatrics at www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx.

