

# The Connection

NOVEMBER 2022



## November is National Gratitude Month

Since Thanksgiving takes place in November, it's not surprising the month was chosen to highlight the importance of gratitude to all of us. After all, practicing gratitude has been proven to positively impact psychological and physical wellbeing.

Runestone Telecom is grateful for our customers, who are also our friends and neighbors. What are you grateful for today?

### Contact Us

100 Runestone Drive / PO Box 336  
Hoffman, MN 56339  
Phone: 320-986-2013

Office Hours: M-F 8 am to 4:30 pm

Email: [rtaoffice@runestone.net](mailto:rtaoffice@runestone.net)

Visit Us: [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net)

Find Us:   

Review Us: 

**Runestone**  
Telecom Association

## TIME FOR **TURKEY,** TOUCHDOWNS, AND TECH

### FEAST ON THE FUN OF THANKSGIVING

What's not to love about this holiday? Thanksgiving brings together treasured family and friends. Plus, it combines some of our favorite things — enjoying a turkey dinner with side dishes galore, streaming football games for hours, and sharing memorable moments via video calls and social media.

If your bandwidth is being gobbled up by the growing number of devices in your home, it's time for an Internet upgrade.

**CALL 320-986-2013 NOW  
FOR FASTER INTERNET**

### Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours!

Our office will be closed  
November 24–25 so  
we may celebrate  
with our families.  
Trouble calls will  
be handled by  
our on-call  
technicians.





Left to right: Jacob Veldhouse, Joe Polzin, Chris Schmiesing, Ken Elvehjem, and Russ Froemming

## Thank You to Our Tech Support Staff

These are the faces of the people who manage and maintain the power behind Runestone Telecom's digital platforms and applications. We greatly appreciate their skill, dedication, and talent, for it enables all of us to enjoy smooth and secure digital experiences. What would we do without you, Tech Support? Thank you!

## Find Us on Facebook

Are you following Runestone Telecom on Facebook? If you are, thanks for your interest and support. If you haven't yet clicked our "Follow" button, please do so now at [www.facebook.com/runestonetelecom](http://www.facebook.com/runestonetelecom). This tells Facebook you want to see our posts in your News Feed and keeps you updated on the valuable content we share — including community events, employee news, scam alerts, and more.

Of course, our Facebook page isn't just about us talking to you. It's also about us talking with you. You're encouraged to post questions, comments, and suggestions, and we'll respond as soon as possible. That's how we get to know our customers better and make our company better.

## New Members

### Elbow Lake

Doebel, Dan & Kim .....218-685-4681



# Debunking Common Internet Myths and Misconceptions

You can't believe everything you hear about the Internet. Let's set the record straight on these common myths and misconceptions.

### **Nobody can track you if you use incognito mode.**

Many people think incognito mode (also called private browsing) is like a magic curtain that hides all browser activity. That's not the case. Incognito mode simply helps you protect your privacy by deleting your browser history so others can't see what you've searched for or which pages you've visited on your device. However, your browser and even the websites you've visited may have a record of the activity from your IP address.

### **The Internet provides free speech.**

This is an Internet myth. You can't necessarily write whatever you want online. Most websites are run by private companies that have the right to establish their own community standards with respect to what appears online. Much like how a private store or restaurant has a say in what types of behavior are allowed on its premises, a private website can control what is said in its comments sections, etc.

### **Your Internet connection will download everything at the same speed.**

You may have a great Internet connection, but the server side of the equation also matters. That's why different things may download at different speeds. The process can take more time if the website you're downloading from is experiencing issues — such as too many demands on the server or limited download speeds.

### **You're protected if you have a firewall.**

Firewalls are an excellent part of any security setup. They can automatically scan incoming data and block out what might be malicious. However, it's a misconception to think a firewall alone will handle all your security. Many online threats come from scams and phishing emails, and there's nothing a firewall can do to prevent you or another user from inadvertently turning over personal or financial information.

**Another Internet misconception is that upgrading your Internet speed will cost a lot of money. Runestone Telecom offers high speeds for surprisingly low prices. Check out what's available at [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net).**

# How to Get Fewer Phone Calls from Scammers

Unfortunately, there's no way to prevent all scam phone calls. But there are things you can do to reduce their numbers.

**The FTC recommends the following:**

**Don't answer calls from blocked or unknown numbers.** The same goes from numbers you don't recognize.

**If you do answer, hang up as soon as you realize it's a robocall and potential scammer.** Don't say anything and don't press any numbers, since those actions let spammers know your phone number is actively used. They can then sell your phone number to another company or begin targeting it more frequently, leading to more robocalls.

**Consider call blocking or call labeling technology.** Scammers can use the Internet to make calls from all over the world, and they don't care if you're on the National Do Not Call Registry. That's why your best defense against unwanted calls is call blocking. Which type of call-blocking or call-labeling technology you use will depend on the phone — whether it's a cell phone, a traditional landline, or a home phone that makes calls over the Internet (VoIP). Ask your phone carrier what services it offers.

**All four major wireless carriers offer some sort of call-blocking feature.** You can also explore getting a third-party app such as Nomorobo and YouMail, which can be effective in weeding out robocalls. Shop your app store and read the online reviews.

**Don't trust your Caller ID.** Scammers can make any name or number show up on your Caller ID screen. That's called call spoofing. So even if it appears to be a government agency such as the Social Security Administration calling, or a call from a local number, it could be a scammer calling from anywhere in the world.

**Read the fine print.** When you sign up for a service or subscription, make sure you read the fine print carefully. Some companies "obtain consent" to robocall you by burying it in terms and conditions they know many customers will neglect to read.



## Creative Uses for a Spare Tablet

Now that you have a shiny new tablet, what are you going to do with your old one? If you don't plan to sell it or give it to a family member, here are some fun tablet uses to consider:

- Second monitor to pair with your computer
- Place to paint, sketch, and draw with a digital pencil
- Smart home controller for appliances, heating and cooling, lights, and more
- Larger screen for GPS navigation while driving
- "Car radio" when paired with apps like Pandora, Spotify, and iHeart Radio
- Digital picture frame to display a slideshow of your favorite photos
- Recipe central for the kitchen counter
- Entertainment option for rooms without a TV
- Home surveillance tool or baby monitor
- Portable movie player for car trips with children
- Book library for your collection of e-books

**As the number of devices in your home goes up, so should your Internet speed. Call 320-986-2013 to ask about getting a speed upgrade.**



## Why a Guest WiFi Network Makes Sense

When people visit your home, one of their first questions is likely to be, "What's your WiFi password?" If your response is to give them the password for your main WiFi network, you may want to think again. Revealing this information could pose a network security risk, since guests might accidentally download a malicious program or connect an already infected device to your network.

A better approach is to set up a guest WiFi network with its own password. A guest WiFi network is essentially a separate access point on your router, which allows visitors to access the Internet without compromising the security of your main WiFi network.

There are other benefits of having a guest WiFi network. You can create a simpler password for guests that's shorter and easier for them to remember. You could also put a limit on the speed/bandwidth available to your visitors while you enjoy maximum performance and speed from your main WiFi network.

**Runestone Telecom can help you set up a guest WiFi network as part of our Whole Home WiFi service. Call 320-986-2013 for details.**

# 5 Ways to Shop Locally This Holiday Season

Instead of buying all your holiday gifts from Amazon or big box stores, we encourage you to shop in your own backyard whenever possible. Local small businesses offer unique items that your family and friends will love. Plus, by shopping locally, you're contributing to the economic growth of our area.

**To get you in the gift-giving spirit, we'll give you a few festive ideas:**

### 1. Choose Christmas cards from local artists.

Why settle for run-of-the-mill cards when you can send works of art? Check to see if there are local artists who make prints of their work and turn them into Christmas cards (or everyday notecards). Your recipients will be impressed, and they may even want to frame the card to use as wall art.

### 2. Buy books from an independent bookstore.

Books make great gifts for people of any age. Browse through a small, locally owned bookstore for a relaxing shopping experience. The owner may even be there to help recommend titles for everyone on your list.

### 3. Visit local holiday festivals.

During this time of the year, many community organizations host holiday festivals that include vendor booths. These events provide the opportunity to discover local artisans and makers you might not have been aware of otherwise. You're sure to find one-of-a-kind stocking stuffers and gifts — such as homemade candles, bath soaps, ornaments, jewelry, kitchen towels, T-shirts, and more.

### 4. Send a seasonal floral arrangement.

When you want to give flowers to someone in town, skip the big online flower services and walk into your friendly neighborhood florist shop instead. You'll be able to literally "stop and smell the roses" during the hectic holiday season and personally choose the type of blooms and arrangement you want.

### 5. Grab a cup of coffee and shop simultaneously.

The next time you meet a friend for coffee at your favorite independent coffee shop, look around for holiday gifts while you're there. You may be able to pick up a selection of gourmet coffees to give as hostess gifts or buy coffee mugs for your child's teachers.

