

# The Connection

DECEMBER 2022



## Have a Very, Very Merry Christmas

All of us at Runestone Telecom hope your Christmas wishes come true. May you enjoy plenty of festivities with family and friends, delight in the season's sights and sounds, and treasure every gift with a grateful heart.

This time of year is also a beautiful opportunity to celebrate what makes our community one of the very best around—including having neighbors like you!

### Contact Us

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Find Us:   

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### Holiday Observed

Runestone Telecom will be closed on Monday, December 26th for the Christmas holiday. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.



## THEY'RE BEGGING FOR FASTER INTERNET THIS CHRISTMAS



## GET YOUR PAWS ON A HIGHER SPEED NOW

It can be doggone frustrating to deal with the hassles of too-slow Internet, like videos that buffer and Zoom calls that freeze up—especially during the busy Christmas season. So, we have a suggestion. Switch to one of our Internet plans with much higher speeds, and everyone in your household (two-legged or four-legged) will be much happier. **Choose from speeds up to 1000 Mbps!**

## DON'T FUR-GET TO CALL 320-986-2013 AND ORDER

Service availability and Internet speed will depend on location. Certain restrictions apply. Contact us for details.



## Channel Negotiations Taking Place

Runestone Cable TV strives to keep the cost of your cable service low while we provide you with a variety of channels. We're currently in negotiations with KMSP and WFTC (My 29). If we don't reach an agreement with the owners of these channels, they'll go off the air December 31st, 2022. In the meantime, please continue to enjoy your programming. There's nothing you need to do, because we're hard at work behind the scenes trying to come to an agreement to keep these channels. If anything changes, we'll let you know.

## New Members

### Barrett

Henrichs, Arlene.....320-528-2890

### Cyrus

Jantz, Larinda.....320-795-2888

### Elbow Lake

Ehlers, Kirk .....218-685-4079

Integrated Networking.218-685-5224

Myron, Justin .....218-685-2258

Stark, Kenda.....218-685-4677

Westrom, Dorothy.....218-685-4877

### Hoffman

Munoz, Antonio.....320-986-2242

### Lowry

Kluck, Roger.....320-283-2333

### Norcross

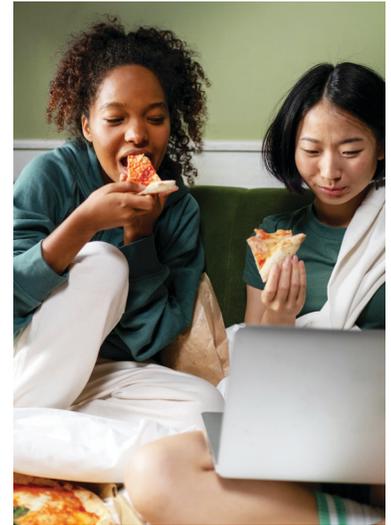
Nordwall, Stacie .....320-284-2117

# Streaming Has Forever Changed At-Home Entertainment

The way most of us enjoy TV today is fundamentally different than it was 10-15 years ago. Instead of watching network and cable programs on a TV only, we're streaming a much broader range of entertainment on a variety of devices — laptops, tablets, and phones — in addition to TVs.

## Clearly, streaming is the new way to watch TV:

- According to [statista.com](https://www.statista.com), 82% of U.S. households have at least one streaming subscription and 53% of them have at least three.
- Nielsen's 2022 "State of Play" report says in an average week, U.S. audiences watch almost 170 billion minutes of streaming video content, which is up from just over 143 billion in 2021.
- Audiences now have more than 817,000 unique program titles to choose from across traditional TV and streaming services. That's up 18% from just over 646,000 at the end of 2019.
- There are now 200+ streaming platforms.



Streaming services have changed what we watch, where we watch, and how we watch. We now have much more freedom in terms of at-home entertainment, and this freedom has opened up a whole new world of both challenges and possibilities.

For example, given the seemingly infinite amount of streaming content available, choosing what to watch next can be a frustrating and time-consuming experience. How many of us have spent half an hour scrolling through titles, only to give up and just rewatch a favorite movie or TV show?

TV series fans are taking advantage of streaming's viewing flexibility to assume more control. While some watch episodes from start to finish, others rewatch scenes (to understand confusing dialogue) or skip unwanted content (such as violence or scenes with a character they dislike). There are also people who watch all or part of a TV series in fast forward (called "speed watching") to consume as much content as possible in a short amount of time. We can't forget another major option enjoyed by many — binging an entire season in a day or two.

**Your streaming experience is impacted by the speed of your Internet connection. If you think you might need an upgrade, call us at 320-986-2013.**

Source: [www.nielsen.com/insights/2022/state-of-play](https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2022/state-of-play)

# December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month

Before toys and other gifts are shared with children this holiday season, it's important to keep safety in mind. Sadly, thousands of children are injured each year, and a few are even killed, due to an interaction with an unsafe or developmentally inappropriate toy.

## Please follow these safety tips:

- Choose age-appropriate toys that match the child's interests and abilities. Always read and heed the label to determine whether a toy is age-appropriate for the child.
- Inspect toys before purchasing. Look for sharp points, edges, and parts that can fly off. Also check for durability should a child attempt to break, crush, or pull toys apart.
- Do not give toys with ropes, cords, or heating elements.
- To reduce the risks of choking, never give small toys with removable magnets or "button" batteries to a child under 3 years of age. The same goes for small balls and other toys with small parts. Here's the rule of thumb: If the toy or part can fit in a toilet paper roll, it's not meant for children under 3 years of age.
- Make sure crayons and markers are labeled "nontoxic."
- Get safety gear, including helmets, for scooters and other riding toys. Helmets should be worn properly at all times and be sized to fit.
- Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than 8 years old, and immediately discard balloons that won't inflate or have popped.
- Look for labels that assure you the toys have passed a safety inspection — "ASTM" means the toy has met the American Society for Testing and Materials standards.

Once holiday gifts are opened, immediately discard plastic wrapping or other toy packaging that could become dangerous playthings. Also keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings, and supervise battery charging since chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to young children.

**The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an excellent resource. Visit [www.cpsc.gov/recalls](http://www.cpsc.gov/recalls) to check to see if a new or used toy you're considering has been banned or recalled. You can also download the free CPSC Recalls App on this site.**



## Just for Fun, Check Out These Holiday Apps

These free apps, available for Android and iOS, are sure to generate smiles for the young (or young at heart) in your family.

### Christmas Sweeper 4

Attention Candy Crush fans! Christmas Sweeper 4 is like your favorite game, except with a Christmas twist. You'll light candles, clear the snow to uncover gifts, catch jumping snowmen, fill up gift bags, drop Santa down the chimney, and more creative mischief.

### Elf Yourself

You replace the Elf faces with the faces of up to five people or pets, select a dance theme, and this app will create a comical elf dance video. Once completed, you can share the video on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

### Message From Santa!

With this app, your kids can call Santa, get video messages, record a wish list, and hear what Santa is doing. There's also a Santa Chatbot that makes it seem like you're talking with the man himself. You can also request a call from Santa, and your children can record a voice message for him.

## Three Creative Christmas Traditions for Families

Looking for ways to add a little extra excitement to the season every year? Check out these fun ideas!

### 1. Magic Santa Key

If your home doesn't have a fireplace, how will Santa get inside? Start the tradition of the Magic Santa Key. Hang it on the tree and tell your kids it only works with Santa's magic and for one night only. On Christmas Eve, leave the key outside the front door.

### 2. Santa's Extra Bag

During December, ask your kids to go through their toys and choose ones they no longer use and want Santa to deliver as extra gifts to other kids. Have them put these toys in a big bag and leave it by the fireplace or front door for Santa to take with him on Christmas Eve.

### 3. Gift-Wrapped Doorway

Don't stop at just wrapping the gifts. Wrap the doorway into your living room as well. Your kids will have a great time ripping through the paper on Christmas morning.

## Jingle Bells Telethon

The 74th Annual Jingle Bells Telethon will air on Runestone Cable TV channel 6 on December 10th starting at 5 pm. You can also watch this event live on [www.jinglebellsalexandria.org](http://www.jinglebellsalexandria.org).



## How Often Do Routers Need Replacement?



You probably don't think about your router unless your WiFi isn't working well. But nothing lasts forever, including a router.

If you own your router — rather than use one provided by Runestone Telecom — you'll need to pay attention to several factors to determine if replacement might be needed:

- **Your router's age** – The average lifespan for a router is about five years. Upgrading every five years allows you to take advantage of improvements to wireless speeds, efficiency, range, and network security. But this isn't a hard-and-fast rule. You may want to upgrade more frequently if you like being on the cutting edge of technology or you put your router through heavy use.
- **Connection issues with WiFi network** – You may experience a loss of your Internet connection or difficulty connecting to the Internet. Poor connectivity could be a sign that your router is nearing the end of its useful life (provided you've ruled out other causes such as network outages or modem issues).
- **Worsening WiFi range and speeds** – Like poor connectivity, worsening WiFi range and speeds can be signs that your router is starting to fail.
- **Weak connections in some rooms** – Is your WiFi connection strong in some places but weak or nonexistent in others? Consider upgrading to a mesh router, which uses multiple devices to extend the range of your network and spread a steadier signal throughout your entire home.
- **Running hot** – It's normal for routers to get a little warm when working, but if yours is too hot to touch comfortably, it's overheated from being overworked. Older routers weren't built to sustain all the Internet-connected devices many households use today.
- **Lacks needed features** – It may be time to replace an older router if it lacks important features found in today's models, such as WiFi 6 and WPA3, the latest generations of WiFi and WiFi security, respectively.

**Don't want to think about WiFi issues? Router maintenance and replacement is included in Runestone Telecom's Whole Home WiFi service. For details, call 320-986-2013.**