



# The Gigaphone

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## The Shouting Ground Newsletter

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### From the Cubicle of the President ...

Howdy Shouting-Grounders – Welcome to another fun-packed thrill-seeking action-adventure issue of the Gigaphone. A couple quick announcements before we get to the really good stuff.

#### Welcome Aboard

We are pleased to announce the addition of Jeremy Farrance to our staff. Jeremy's been "in the biz" for over ten years, and even remembers fondly his Commodore 64 and Amiga days. Ahh...now where is that 1541? Jeremy will be working on our network service maintenance contracts as well as providing general technical support to our clients. Welcome to the team!

#### Webmail Released

On the road and only have access to a web-browser? Shouting Ground clients can now check their E-mail through a web-browser from anywhere on the Internet. Send and receive – use attachments – see all your mailboxes, it can all be done through a web-browser. Bill will explain more later in this issue.

#### Link Your Offices

Are you a company with a remote office or a heavy-user telecommuter? Do you need to share files frequently, or need some other secure method of interoffice data communication? Shouting Ground has an exciting new Private DSL product suited just for this purpose. Set up 384kbps, 768kbps, 1.1 Mbps (even higher!) bi-directional connections between your local office and another physical location. They can even be in different parts of the U.S. More affordable than point-to-point T-1s, and in some cases faster! You can even piggyback Internet traffic between offices and get rid of Internet access at that remote location. Call or E-mail us for details.

... and now, "the really good stuff."

*Bryan Holloway,  
President*



### Brink's File Truck

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) has long been the favorite protocol used to move files from machine to machine across the Internet and even if you don't think you've ever used FTP, you probably have. Ever downloaded a program from the Internet? It's very likely the program was transferred to your machine via FTP, but your browser and the remote machine did all the behind-the-scenes work. Individuals and companies that need to send and receive large files have been using standalone FTP clients for years. One of the big shortcomings of FTP is that the data streams are unencrypted, meaning a malicious or curious person

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### Why Pay More?

So many of the acronyms that are used to identify network services are confusing. Most people understand the various options and differences with Internet dialup services, but technologies like DSL are much more diverse and difficult for the consumer to compare. We hope to clarify the different DSL services available, and explain why some cost so much more than others that seemingly offer comparable speeds.

DSL is not a new technology, but innovations in the past 2-3 years have made it more feasible to deploy on a widespread basis. The promise of DSL was that it would be cheap, since it could provide high-speed access on ordinary copper pairs that were already in place. But the "last mile," getting the high-speed access to the home, is only part of the total cost of the service, and there are many areas where it is not feasible to run DSL due to distance, wire condition, or available wire pairs.

The largest part of the cost of Internet access continues to be the cost of the bandwidth to the Internet backbone, and not the line you use to connect to your ISP. Then there is equipment needed on both the customer location, (called CPE, for "customer

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### World Wide Webmail

Remote access and management of your Shouting Ground E-mail account just became easier with our latest mail server marvel - Webmail! This grand feature allows you to check your Shouting Ground E-mail from any computer with both an Internet connection and a web browser (Internet Explorer, Netscape, etc.) with cookies enabled.

You can access the Webmail login page by pointing your web browser at the secured site: <https://webmail.shout.net>, or from our homepage, <http://www.shout.net>. If your browser doesn't support HTTPS, an unsecured version is also available by removing the 's' from 'https://'. Once you are at the login page just provide your username and password and you will see any messages you have on our server listed through the spiffy web based interface! If you should experience any troubles accessing Webmail be sure to check out our Webmail Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) web page located at <http://www.shout.net/webmailfaq.html>.

Using the IMAP protocol, Webmail views only the messages located on the server, and will not remove any messages from the server unless you intentionally delete or move them into the trash.

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## **Brink's**, *continued from front*

with the proper know-how can intercept and view said data streams. A few Gigaphones ago I wrote about ssh or secure shell, which allows setting up an encrypted 'tunnel' between two machines, and subsequently all traffic between these two machines is also encrypted until it emerges at either end of the 'tunnel'. So, the next logical step is to move files through this tunnel, and skip plain ol' FTP altogether. This is where two more protocols come into play: scp and sftp.

The results for both of these protocols are the same – securely moving files from machine to machine. The main difference is that sftp is interactive from a command line, but only really nerdy people like me care about that. Most users prefer a graphical interface for file transfer, with some of the more recognizable names being WsFTP, CuteFTP, FTP Explorer, etc. Most of these well known clients do not have the ability to do sftp or scp. Luckily, for those that need or just plain like the idea of the extra security file transfer over ssh tunnels allows, there are several offerings for free, or pretty darn close to free.

Two of the best for the Windows platform are:

- *Secure iXplorer* - <http://www.i-tree.org/secixpro/index.htm>
- *WinSCP* - <http://winscp.vse.cz/eng/>

Three for Mac OS:

- *MacSFTP* - <http://pro.wanadoo.fr/chombier>
- *Rbrowser* (OS X only) - <http://www.rbrowser.com>
- *NiftyTelnetSSH* (trusty but clunky, for Mac OS 9 or earlier) - <http://www.lysator.liu.se/~jonasw/freeware/niftyssh/>

*Jim Creason,*

*Director of Support Services*



## **Why Pay More?**, *continued from front*

premises equipment”) and the ISP end (CO, for “central office”), and circuits to route the DSL traffic to the Internet. This is where low cost DSL services tend to deliver less than expected. You may never get what you pay for. The largest DSL provider in this area has a service agreement that guarantees only half of the bandwidth you order. How can you expect to get reliable 1 megabit service for less than \$40 per month when a 1 megabit circuit to the Internet costs the ISP closer to \$1500, not including capital equipment and operation costs? Federal law requires that the local telephone companies share their infrastructure with competitors at reasonable wholesale costs related to the actual cost of providing the service. One has to wonder why they can offer DSL service to their own customers for \$30 – 40 per month, but the cost of the same line (without service or Internet access) to the competitor is around \$100 per month. What kind of service will you get if they lose money on it consistently? Consider that three of the four largest nationwide DSL providers filed for bankruptcy in the past two years.

Many of the larger DSL providers have cut costs by supplying bridged connections to their equipment, using protocols like PPPoE (PPP over Ethernet) to separate the traffic. This obviates one of the original advantages of DSL over cable, that it's a separate rather than shared line.

Some providers are constraining what their users can do with their DSL lines. Running servers is often prohibited, and the providers enforce this by changing your IP address frequently. Some providers will offer static addresses for an extra fee, but won't route them as a subnet. Recently, some providers have started offering “sticky” addresses instead of static, that aren't expected to change as often. Some Road Runner customers were

reporting address changes as frequently as every half hour.

Shouting Ground doesn't offer low cost ADSL services because we can't afford to subsidize it. We provide a high quality service that delivers what you expect, with a much larger variety of options available. After eight years as an ISP, we are certain that you can't offer high quality reliable services at a loss and remain in business. Our business class services are competitively priced, and may be substantially cheaper than a leased line. We make sure you get what you pay for.

*Mike Berger,*  
*Director of Engineering*



## **Webmail**, *continued from front*

Even messages placed in the trash folder are not immediately removed unless you delete them from within the folder itself, or click on the “Purge” link to empty it. This makes it especially handy for those who wish to continue downloading their E-mail for storage onto their local computer, but wish to be able to check for new message while visiting a friend, or on the road. It really does make the perfect companion to mail clients such as Eudora or Netscape Mail using the very common POP3 setup.

Aside from convenience, Webmail also offers users some very cool configuration options such as an address book, message highlighting, and server side folder management (great for storing saved messages for remote access.) To access the settings, click on the “Options” link at the top of any page after logging in. From here you can go to the Display Preferences where you can select from a lengthy list of color themes, or even apply a style sheet to all of the text that Webmail displays. A couple tips: the style sheet “sans-10” (sans serif 10pt font) looks sharp, but stay away from the “In the Pink” theme... Yuck!

Also worth noting is that you can make the size of your messages appear in the message index by going to the “Index Order” menu from the “Options” link. Those who have experienced the notorious large E-mail message clogging up your inbox, and preventing you from downloading your E-mail will really appreciate the ability to see and delete the culprit message without having to download it to your computer first.

These are just a few of the ways that Webmail will make accessing and managing your Shouting Ground E-mail easier, and more features are sure to be added in the not too distant future! We hope you enjoy its use!

*Bill Cline,*

*Technical Support Associate*



## **Cool Links**

Here are a few links to some cool web pages we just had to share with somebody! Some are useful, others are ... well, just wacky!

- Free Virus Protection Software* - <http://www.grisoft.com>
- Spybot Spyware Removal Utility* - <http://spybot.eon.net.au>
- Opera Web Browser* - <http://www.opera.com>
- IT Knowledge Base* - <http://www.experts-exchange.com>
- File Recovery* - [http://www.pcinspector.de/file\\_recovery/UK](http://www.pcinspector.de/file_recovery/UK)
- Dancing Glen* - <http://www.carlbaldwin.co.uk/glendance>
- Interactive Face* - <http://www.alterfin.com/dominique>

Note that we cannot provide support for software available on any of these sites. Please surf responsibly!

-Your Shouting Ground Staff