



The Gigaphone

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The Shouting Ground Newsletter

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State of the ISP

Attention Shouters,

Put on your decoder rings, because it's been an exciting last few months.

Upgrades

We've had 12 OC-3 lines installed in our facility here in Champaign! That's an aggregate of 1.86 Gbps of bandwidth now coming into the building. (Ok, we're not using all of it, but it gives us lots of room for growth.)

One benefit is our ability to now offer fractional and full T-1 services at a discounted rate. Starting at just \$245.00/mo, you get the guaranteed bi-directional bandwidth and reliability that only comes with T-1 connectivity. Businesses outside of DSL reach will find T-1 pricing more affordable than ever. Most plans even include equipment, so call us at 217-351-7921 for details.

In addition to the new fiber, Shouting Ground is also now multi-homing with three major carriers: SBC, Level3, and Yipes. This provides added redundancy should one provider have a problem on their backbone.

New Staff

We are very pleased to announce that Laura White has joined our staff here in the office. She is helping us run the office and she is making sales calls too. She's also a stand-up comedian, but don't tell her I said that. We mentioned in our last newsletter that Shouting Ground is now an authorized Nextel representative. If you are considering switching cell providers, looking for upgrades, or want to renew a Nextel contract, please contact Laura; she'll be more than happy to assist.

In Closing

The doves living in our winch are now on their third brood. And if you have no idea what that means, stop by the office to say hi.

Bryan Holloway,
President



When Flat Rate Becomes Fat Rate

As competition for local phone service increases, new rate plans are being advertised in an attempt to capture your business. They're more confusing than ever. At one time you only had to differentiate between local and long distance calls. Local calls were billed by the telephone company, and long distance by the long distance provider. Then competitors were allowed to offer phone services using the local phone company's circuits. Calls were divided into three groups: local, long distance, and local toll calls, all charged at different rates.

Recently advertised plans boast "unlimited local and long distance calling" at a flat rate, but don't emphasize the limitations. All of the plans offered so far exclude "business long distance and local Internet calls." Those calls are billed at a per-minute rate. Some people have already been surprised by bills ranging from \$500 to \$2500 per month of "flat-rate" telephone service. They expected that all calls to numbers in their local calling area were billed at the same rate.

What constitutes "business long distance" or "Internet" calls is at the discretion of your telephone service provider; you can't tell from the phone number. Look over the fine print for limitations, and choose your calling plan carefully.

Mike Berger,
Director of Engineering



Get it Done with Nextel

Shouting Ground is proud to be your downtown Champaign

NEXTEL®

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

Whether you're looking for a phone for your own personal use, several phones for your small business, or multiple phones to increase the productivity of your large company, Nextel has a solution for you. As an authorized Nextel Representative, Shouting Ground Technologies can help you find the right solution for your needs. With a plethora of both phones and plans available, let us find a combination that saves you money, while increasing your productivity and communication.

Most service plans include unlimited Direct Connect, or Walkie Talkie, minutes so it's a great option for both families and

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Windows Worm

The Sasser virus is one of the latest Internet worms designed to infect a computer with no action required by the computer's operator. If your computer is running Windows XP, Windows 2000 or Windows Server 2003, then it is vulnerable.

One attribute that sets Sasser apart from other viruses, is that a computer can become infected simply by being online without the latest Windows Update patches from Microsoft. Upon infection, your computer may become slow and unstable, and

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Windows Worm..., continued from front

your virus protection is often rendered useless, thus making the virus very difficult to remove. The patches for this security hole were released just days before this exploiting virus hit the Internet, so be sure to visit the Windows Update site if you have not already.

To protect your computer against this threat, install the latest Windows security patches and virus definition updates to your anti-virus software. If your computer is already infected you may not be able to get to these sites, so what do you do if you can't download the updates? Removal is possible, but only take the following advice if you understand what you are doing in each step. If you do not feel up to the task, then make arrangements with us, or any local computer shop for some virus removal maintenance.

If you cannot access the necessary web sites, you will need to disable the virus' system process first. Close all applications, then Hold <Ctrl> and <Shift> then press <Esc>. This should start up the Windows Task Manager. Click the "Processes" tab of the Task Manager window and look for the process with the highest CPU usage. Aside from the "System Idle Process," anything that is chewing up your CPU's resources should be stopped by first highlighting the process, then clicking the "End Process" button. This should enable you to use your Internet connection again in order to download the Windows Updates and virus definitions.

You may also need to download an independent virus removal utility such as McAfee's Stinger. This small program is available at <http://vil.nai.com/vil/stinger>, and is very useful when you suspect a virus has infected your computer and disabled your regular anti-virus software. Again, don't forget to frequently visit <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com> to get the latest Windows patches.

The main lesson to take from this is that you should always keep your software up to date. By keeping your operating system and anti-virus software updated, you will be better protected from the next nasty virus that is sure to come.

Steve Dyson,

Technical Support Associate



Get it Done..., continued from front

businesses to stay connected 24/7 without using any cell minutes. And now, for a very small fee, Nationwide Direct Connect is available. Forget huge phone bills for calls to your sister in Oregon, your brother in Maine, or your business partner traveling to Florida. Once you all have Nextel NationWide Direct Connect, you can chat it up as much as you want, anytime you want, with no additional charge. Just contact us for more information at 217-351-7921 or E-mail us at nextel@shout.net

Laura White,

Phone Products Manager



The Sum of the DSL Parts

Recent ads have boasted incredible prices for high speed symmetric DSL (SDSL) service. After reading the fine print, we discovered how they did it.

The price didn't include the line to the telco, or equipment. Imagine being told the price of a new car, only to discover that it didn't include an engine.

If you're looking at a quote for new service, be sure it includes all the components:

- A router or modem to interface your network to the data line.
- The DSL service cost (including any extra charges that might apply for routing additional addresses or connecting additional computers.
- The transport -- the data line to the Telco or Internet Service Provider.

In the examples we saw, the actual cost including the line was about double the amount in the ads. Don't make a decision until you know what the bottom line will be.

Mike Berger,

Director of Engineering



Goin' Phishing

If it just takes one bad apple to spoil a bunch, then the Internet is spoiled rotten. One trend that is gaining popularity among online scammers is a technique labeled as "phishing," which usually consists of seemingly legitimate E-mail messages that are designed to get the recipient to provide information ranging from credit card numbers to eBay passwords.

In the past, most attempts at phishing were obviously fraudulent, containing frequent typos and misspellings, or simply being an outrageous story about how you can get in on a deceased African prince's hidden stash of \$25 million dollars, simply by giving them your bank account number. Now these web criminals are tailoring their bait messages with professional looking graphics and spoofed "From" headers, to make the message appear all the more real.

Even worse, just last year an instance of phishing was included in a variant of the mass mailing Mimail virus. The result was millions of forged messages, claiming that the recipient's PayPal account was soon to expire, while providing a link to a fake web site for the victim to submit their private information.

So between viruses, spoofed E-mail addresses, and phishing scams, how can you avoid these victimizing traps? The best advice has always been, if you don't know -- then ask. Unless you are 100% sure that the E-mail is valid, then you'd better think twice before clicking any suspicious links or opening the attachment.

Another good habit is to read the privacy and contact policies of any companies who you suspect the phisher may be spoofing. Often you will find companies such as Microsoft, PayPal, and credit card providers will only request personal information over the phone or directly from their web site, and not through E-mail. If they do contact you through E-mail, check that the addresses, links, and contact information is consistent with the information on their official web site. For instance, any legitimate E-mail sent to you from Shouting Ground will be from admin@shout.net or billing@shout.net, and will include our signature containing our address and telephone number.

While this may take some of the convenience away from E-mail, it will help keep your computer and sensitive information safe from hackers, scammers, and other bad apples.

Bill Cline,

Technical Support Associate