



News You Can Use

NEWS

Apple and Cisco have reached an agreement about the iPhone name.

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QUICK TIPS

RECYCLING ELECTRONICS

The Morro Bay Recycling Center now takes *all* electronic waste: TVs, radios, CRTs, computers, etc. They also take paint and chemicals. They're on Hwy 41 near the ocean, open from 11-3 Saturdays.

RESETTING THE CABLE

If your Charter Internet connection goes dead, don't bother troubleshooting on the computer.

Try this first:

1. Turn off the cable modem and your router (if you have one). Shut down the computer or put it to sleep.
2. Turn the cable modem on again.
3. Wait a *full minute* for the modem to restart.
4. If you have a router, turn it on and wait another thirty seconds.
5. Wake or start the computer.

This same tip applies to those using DSL Internet service, but they rarely have the need to do so.

Interesting, but Unlikely _____ **all**

Attacking Your Router?

A recent article states that it may be possible for a bad guy to change settings on your wireless router/base station. The concept has been proposed, though nobody is known to have used it.

"The attack works because most of the popular home routers ship with default passwords...the exploit is...designed to reconfigure the router to use the attacker's DNS servers."

Basically, the bad guy hacks a web page. You view that hacked page and the attacker then gains access to your router. By changing the DNS server settings, he can then cause future web pages to come from his counterfeit copies, rather than the real ones. (He might create fake banking sites, in order to trick you into entering important information.)

Don't Worry

All the routers I've installed, wireless or not, have "real" passwords; I don't leave them with the manufacturer's default password. That would be silly!

Finally! _____ **all**

Charter: Making it Better

Charter is in the process of upgrading equipment on the North Coast, so we can expect faster speeds, fewer delays, and perhaps improved technical support. (They're combining some support functions from Los Osos to Cambria.)

The upgrade process will continue through April, and they advise there may be occasional interruptions during the work.

I now see almost 4mbit speed, though that varies at times. In fall 2006, Charter's performance got pretty bad all over town.

Resetting After An Outage

After a temporary outage, you may lose your Internet connectivity: either your mail or web activity stops.

Use the procedure at the left to reset the cable modem and your router/base station. Be especially careful at step 3: If you don't wait long enough for the modem to restart, you'll have to start over.

MACS ONLY

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THE FINE PRINT**THE PRICE LIST**

Standard Rate is \$52/hr.

Apple Remote Desktop help is billed at the reduced rate of \$35/hr.

Phone support is free, except if the call runs to a half hour. Then it's billed at the further-reduced rate of \$30/hr.

Email support is always free. Ask your questions and you'll get an answer, usually within a few hours.

Invoices are mailed on the first of each month, covering charges incurred during the prior month. (So, for example, you'll be billed on May 1st for work done in April.)

New Clients receive a one-time half hour discount !

WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Solving your problem the *right* way, as much as humanly possible.

Not making things worse.

Some support folks try to fix one problem and end up creating new ones. Where does that leave you?

Keeping your costs down. It's more important to provide good service than to squeeze out a few more bucks. When you see a "comp" item on an invoice, it's my way of helping to keep your costs low.

It Isn't "If," it's "When" _____ all

Catch Your Hard Drive In Time

Recently, I've worked on three failing hard drives in as many weeks. The first was a 250GB drive in an iMac G5, two years old. It was destroying data, but I was able to make a backup of all the files.

The second was an 80GB drive in an iMac G4, about three years old. This one needed a full data-recovery procedure to recover all the files. The third, a 40GB drive in another iMac G4, was between four and five years old. This drive was the easiest to replace: it was still functional, though the signs were there.

All Drives Will Fail Eventually

There's no getting around it: every hard drive will eventually fail. Unfortunately, we have no way of predicting *when* the failure will occur. But there are some early-warning signs.

Unusual Sounds

If you hear noises coming from the drive (different from the usual operational sounds), the drive may be having trouble reading data. Sometimes the computer fan hides these sounds.

- A continuous grinding or buzz;
- Rapid rattling or buzzing sounds.
- Loud clicking or a clunking noise

Unexplained System Stalls

When a drive has trouble reading data, it often stalls the entire system for up to 30 seconds. You'll see the spinning color wheel, and then everything will look fine. Till the next time you get the delay.

The Important Thing

The big thing is to catch the drive before it finally dies and loses all your files. Naturally, keeping backups is the safest plan, so nothing is at risk.

Quick Reference _____ OSX

How-To's On My Web Site

I've put up how-to instructions for common tasks on my web site for easy reference.

Go to www.cfcl.com/rick/macsonly and choose **How-To** from the navigation bar at the left.

If you have a task for which you'd like similar instructions, let me know.