

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

Moderator: Michele Higgs
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3:00 p.m. EDT

Operator: Thank you for standing by and welcome to the Monthly Neighborhood Networks Conference Call. Today's call is being recorded.

At this time, I'd like to turn the call over to Ms. Michele Higgs. Please go ahead, ma'am.

Michele Higgs: Thank you, Tom. Hello, everyone. I want to welcome you to the June Neighborhood Networks Conference Call. Boy, half the year is gone.

My name, as you know, is Michele Higgs and I'm a technical assistance coordinator. Today I'm joined by Joyce Mortimer who coordinated the contents of this call. Together, we represent the team of technical assistance coordinators who help you to address the needs of the various Neighborhood Networks centers around the country.

I want to thank you for joining us today. We hope you will carry away a lot of good information that will aid you in keeping your computer equipment current and in good repair. A Neighborhood Networks center without functioning equipment is just not a Neighborhood Networks center. How can a center's goals be accomplished if the computers are slow, infected with viruses or just don't work? You have this wonderful resource, your Neighborhood Networks center on your property,

and you want to let your residents and your community make the best possible use of it, not mutter about it as they walk away disappointed.

Who will come if the computers don't work? What about the youth? What are they going to do?

Our call today is entitled, "Keep Your Computers and Peripherals Running: Technology Tips and Tools". I think we're going to get a lot of good information about this, so I'm going to alter my remarks just a little bit so that I'm not talking so much.

From new folks to tech savvy folks, everybody's impacted if the computers at your center are not healthy or in good shape. I want to identify an acronym, which is "IT"; you will no doubt hear it again during the course of this call. IT stands for "information technology", which deals with the use of computer hardware and software to convert, store, protect, transmit and retrieve information, among other things. The US Census Bureau utilized the first commercial computer called UNIVAC--Universal Automatic Computer--in the early 50's. It was enormous. It filled a room of its own and it was way slow by today's standards.

Since the development of the personal computer in the early 80's, however, the size of the hardware has decreased as its capabilities have increased. As we've turned more of our information over to this agile little machine, we've also become mindful of the inevitable hiccups and how we must take care to keep information flowing.

Our talk today will start with the center and explore what it needs, how it deals with these issues. We will hear from LaToya Shields, who is the property manager and center director for the Vince Salvagio Community Center in Houston Texas, and Beverly Murray, who is outreach coordinator and board president with the Hickory Hollow Computer Learning Center in Wayne, Michigan.

Then, dare I use the term “techie’s”? There, I said it, but I mean it in the nicest possible way.

We’ll hear from the folks who make keeping computers running look so effortless, so maddeningly easy.

We’re going to speak with Jeffrey Hill, who’s president of MyGait Software, a software services provider geared to the needs of older adults. In addition to providing and maintaining specialized hardware, MyGait trains residents and staff and offers an around-the-clock support line for any computer problems that a user may encounter. He will be joined today by his colleague, Chris Carbajal. We will also hear from Roland Liverpool, the Computer Doctor, an independent IT contractor and college IT instructor.

We have a lot to present today, so I’m going to stop talking and get on with it. But, of course, before I do that, I must do a little housekeeping. We have 15 new centers to welcome to the neighborhood today. They are Mount O’Brien Complex Learning Center in Arkansas, Community Garden Towers West Neighborhood Networks Resource Center in California, Concord Huntington Park Computer Center in California, Northside Terraces in Connecticut, Hartford Neighborhood Center in Connecticut, Chappelle Gardens Neighborhood Networks Computer Center in Connecticut, let’s hear it for Connecticut; Legion Oasis in Montana, Defreese Manor in Nebraska, St. Genevieve’s Village in New Mexico, Chaparral Senior Housing in New Mexico, Villa del Sol Senior Housing in New Mexico, that’s three from New Mexico; Harr Plaza Network Center in Ohio, Famicos Foundation Park Village TILI Center in Ohio, Monserrate Towers Apartments Learning Center in Puerto Rico, and Trailside Village in Washington. Welcome to all of these centers and congratulations!

Also, I need to remind you about the Strategic Tracking Reporting Tool also known as the START Business Plan. START will help you look at the resources and capacity of your center. START is easy to access and easy to update online. Just gather your information, follow your instructions and fill in the blanks. Go to the Neighborhood Networks Web Site, which is

www.neighborhoodnetworks.org and click on the link for the START business plan to the left of the home page.

If you have questions about the START business plan, resident surveys, upcoming special events or general information about the Neighborhood Networks Initiative, please call the toll-free Neighborhood Networks information line at 888-312-2743. You can also visit the Neighborhood Networks Web site, which is www.neighborhoodnetworks.org.

Let me also tell you about online networking through the Neighborhood Networks Message Board, where you can share information among yourselves, post news, and ask questions. Be aware that this is not a real-time resource. You can post your information and then revisit the board in a day or so to see what kinds of responses you have received. Just go to the Web site, that's www.neighborhoodnetworks.org, and click on the Neighborhood Networks Online Networking link to the right under the green banner labeled "Helpful Tools". When you get there, follow the instructions and guidelines or click "Enter Online Discussion". I encourage you to give it a try. The message board is just one more way to connect with your peers and learn more ways to help your centers.

Finally, I want to remind listeners that a transcript of this call will be made available on the Neighborhood Networks Web site in about two weeks.

As I said, we've got a lot of good information and I'm certain this is a topic that will generate questions, so I'm going to hush and let our speakers go ahead.

I'd like to start the discussion off with LaToya Shields. LaToya, can you tell us a little about your center and what you've learned about maintaining the technology there?

LaToya Shields: Yes, the center I work in is the Vince Salvagio Community Center in Houston, Texas.

The center has been up since 1999, about eight years. In our lab, we have 15 computers that are open generally for the residents here. They use Internet, the children come in and do homework, the adults job search, and they construct resumes and things of that nature. And that's pretty much about the center, generally.

Michele Higgs: OK and what about the issues. Do you have any issues? Of course you have in the eight years that you've been there. We just talked, while we were waiting for the call to begin, about the fact that your satellite is out and right now it's just a matter of time before your computers are up again. But, have you had any issues that you had to overcome with regard to keeping your computers running, kids who spill coffee, not kids who spill coffee but people who spill coffee on them, you know, things that you did have to overcome to keep things running?

LaToya Shields: Right. Since I've been here, the only issue, I've been here since last summer, May 2006, and the only major issue, believe it or not, is the issue that we're experiencing right now with the satellite. We have an IT specialist who comes in every two to three months to update all software, to add virus protection and to make sure that the computers run really well. Prior to that, I'm not aware of anything else major that went wrong or has gone wrong with the computers.

Michele Higgs: Well, lucky, lucky you.

LaToya Shields: Lucky me.

Michele Higgs: Yes, knock on wood. The IT person that you have coming in, is he someone who comes from your management office?

LaToya Shields: Right. He's contracted through the management department, yes.

Michele Higgs: I just wanted to find out if you were lucky enough to have someone on board to help you out with your equipment?

LaToya Shields: No, we're not. I'm the only staff member here. We don't involve the residents in helping to maintain the center equipment. The property owner, he likes to handle that.

Michele Higgs: Oh, OK.

LaToya Shields: We're lucky in that aspect. He does everything.

Michele Higgs: There you go. Well, I'm going to ask Beverly to hop in on this as well ...

LaToya Shields: OK.

Michele Higgs: ... and I understand that Beverly has a staff member with her, Angela Midura?

Angela Midura: Yes.

Michele Higgs: Hi, Angela. Sorry, I didn't know you were with Beverly at the outset, otherwise I would've introduced you earlier. Thanks for joining us today.

Angela Midura: Thank you.

Michele Higgs: I wanted to find out if there's anything that you wanted to say on this point? We had spoken earlier about your working with your management company to keep your equipment up.

Beverly Murray: OK. Are you asking me or Angela?

Michele Higgs: Either of you.

Beverly Murray: Oh, OK, well, our management agent, Huntington Management, has IT staff that works directly for the company and they're very supportive to our center. Our center is only about six months old and we have a lot of older computers that were donated by Huntington Management as well as the City of Wayne, some from Detroit. We keep them up right now, we are able to maintain them, but we are looking for growth and we hope to get a grant of some sort to get some new computers. We want the flat screens and so forth and we would like to go wireless, eventually. But like I said, we're still beginning, so that's where we are right now.

We have a great IT staff through Huntington Management.

Michele Higgs: Well, again, knock on wood, you're very lucky.

Joyce Mortimer: So Angela, this is Joyce, how do you work with, how do you interface with the management company and the computer learning center when it comes to maintaining the IT equipment?

Angela Midura: Well, generally if there's an issue, then I will work with Beverly Murray and we'll try to resolve it in-house if something is simple. If not, we will contact our IT person and generally our issue will be resolved very quickly. We have a very supportive staff, as Beverly said.

Beverly Murray: And usually, they're here within 24 hours.

Michele Higgs: Oh, great. I'm going to ask one question. Angela, I hear you breaking in and out. If you could get a little bit closer to the speaker, that would be very helpful.

Angela Midura: OK.

Michele Higgs: Thanks.

Joyce Mortimer: I have a question for the three of you; do you have a plan? Because I believe Jeffery and Chris will speak a bit to this later on, but do you have a plan for maintaining your equipment? Do you have a plan for defragmenting, dusting off the back of the computers to keep them running less hot?

Beverly Murray: Well, what we hope to do is eventually train some of the residents that use the center to come in, to involve the members that live out here and let them maintain the computers that way for us, the dusting, and the defragments and so forth.

Michele Higgs: So basically for some of the minor work you want to get the residents involved...

Beverly Murray: Yes.

Michele Higgs: To get the residents involved, but not ...

Female: We want them because it's their center. Well, it's the community, but it's on our property so we would love to get the residents involved.

Michele Higgs: It sounds like a good idea to me. I'm going to take a question to Chris. We had talked about this a bit and Beverly, you brought up using the older computers. Chris, could you address that once again in terms of, how centers can use older computers or when they need to know not to use older computers?

Chris Caracal: Right, and kind of what we had mentioned before, it's really – it's tough to make a general statement. It's very much on a case-by-case basis. It depends how old it actually is, what state

it's in. Because with computers, the technology changes pretty rapidly, so three years ago, you could probably get some use out of that. If it's five years, six years, there's a chance you probably can't. But, like I said, it's really on a case-by-case basis, and there's a lot of hurdles with older equipment whether it doesn't have the speed or the horsepower that's required for today's applications, or in fact, you can't find the parts to fix it, I mean, if it's been long enough.

So, that's what we were talking about earlier and those are the challenges you face. But, you know, they vary case by case. It's tough to say overall.

Michele Higgs: Yes. Everyone will just have to judge as they go along.

Chris Carbajal: Right. I wish I had a better, like, overall solution.

Michele Higgs: Yes. I am glad that Beverly brought that issue up because a number of times our centers are using older equipment and equipment that has been donated and I guess there is a set-point beyond which it's not useful, if it's, so many years old. It's just like having an old car. You know, if you can't find the parts to fix it, its not useful for you.

Chris Carbajal: Right, and what we found is sometimes just the fact that it is old, even if you can get it up and running, often, like you said with an old car, it presents more frustration than anything else, whether it runs slowly or if you always have to fix it. Sometimes, like you said, its sort of diminishing returns you get down that road, sometimes. Like you said, it depends.

Michele Higgs: Yes, it depends on each case as they go along.

Well, I'm going to ask Jeffrey to jump in on this one. Since we are talking about tools, and tips, and techniques for our centers and I'm certain that's what everyone is listening for. I was talking with LaToya when we started the call and mentioning how I came back from travel once and

turned on my computer and it just went “kaflooeey” and that’s the word. That’s the only thing I could say. I didn’t know what had happened, and I didn’t know what button to push and I didn’t want to push any buttons because I thought I might do something else to it.

So I’m certain that happens from time to time, you know, the screen goes black and you don’t know what’s wrong. Our centers are very interested in finding out what kinds of things they can look for, what kinds of things they can do. And of course, I also want you to talk about MyGait and the services that you provide for the senior centers.

But I do want to talk about the tips and tools.

Jeffrey Hill: Yes, ma’am. Well, my name is Jeffrey Hill and I’m, along with Chris, with a company called MyGait. We won’t spend a lot of time, but basically, what we’ve done is we focused on the senior computing centers, and we’ve developed a software and hardware system that makes it easier for seniors to use computers and the Internet, and we’ve had it in a number of Neighborhood Network Centers.

What they wanted us to focus on today, which we think we can help you all out with, is kind of how we go about maintaining and managing Neighborhood Network Centers that have our services and basically something that would be called the “Managed Computer Service”.

So, essentially that’s what we do as a company and we’re a managed service provider. Now, and Chris jump in whenever, but when we talk about equipment and stuff like that, we recognize you can stretch the useful life of equipment to a certain point, and then your equipment is going to be, everything is going to be obsolete at some point in time, but the little things that you can do to maintain your equipment.

I think I heard from Beverly on getting some residents involved in helping, just keeping your equipment clean, keeping food and drink away from your equipment so that you don't have to be replacing keyboards, you don't have to be replacing the mouse. Keeping them dust free and it's as easy as a \$3 bottle of spray air from Walgreens or Wal-Mart or any computer store. You do it once or twice a week and you'd be amazed at the performance of that hardware going forward.

Now, for software, in an updating perspective, what we do is we update all of our PCs that we're responsible for remotely. We push everything through the Internet. On top of that, you know, it's our experience as I'm sure it is with most of your experience, that you have to be in front of the PC from an IT or a technical perspective on a fairly regular basis just to make sure everything's running smooth.

So essentially, what we do for our clients, both Neighborhood Networks clients and clients that we have outside of the Neighborhood Networks program, is if a PC goes down or goes "kafluoey" we try to streamline our process. So if a PC goes down, somebody calls into our help line, which is available all day; but we always have somebody at our office because we work too hard. But, it's 8:00 to 6:00, I think we say, central business time hours.

Somebody would call in and they'd say, our network is down or the PC's not working. And "the PC's not working," as you all know, can be 50 different things. Our process is, if the PC's not working, we ask you to do basically three different things. The first thing is checking to see if the network is working. Let's check and see, if you have five PCs in that room and all the PCs aren't working, well, that means your issue isn't with your PC site, your issue is at your network site. So it's either at your router, or your DSL line, or as what LaToya was speaking to, the satellite was down that they were getting their Internet through, so that's kind of the first thing.

So, the first thing could be a network issue. The second thing that we always check on is, is it a PC issue? Do we hear some beeps, when that PC goes on, that we're not supposed to hear?

That doesn't sound very technical, but the beeps when you turn a computer on actually can tell you what's wrong with it. There's a beep pattern as it comes on, so we check the beep pattern, and we just have somebody hold the phone to the PC and say, well, that's beeping incorrectly, so we need to do something about it.

Then the third thing we do is ask: is there a software program? Has somebody gone onto your PCs? I'm sure if you all haven't discovered yet, there are some people who go up to the PCs and "know more about them" and I say that in quotations, than everybody else, and can cause some issues with your PCs. They don't even necessarily know they're causing issues with the PCs, so that can cause a software problem.

If it's a hardware problem, we just ship new hardware to our clients. If it's a software problem, there are ways to make an image of your PC, and simply reload that image when you have a problem, so that you're not always troubleshooting. That's something that if you work with an IT company, the IT company can do. It's a little bit of a complicated process, but what it allows you as an administrator of a Neighborhood Networks center to do is not have to go through an hour process of is this, you know, do I need to do this? Do I need to check this? Do I need to check this? What it lets you do is just plug a disk in or plug a little key in and reset your PC.

Essentially what that does for us from a managed computer service perspective, is that we can have one solution for a whole slew of problems that can be presented with computers because inevitably you're always going to have some problems with PCs.

Did I confuse everybody there?

Michele Higgs: No, I think we could follow.

Jeffrey Hill: So, that's essentially how we've gone about managing computer rooms in communities.

We're based in Houston and we manage computer rooms in California and Illinois and most of it we're able to do, we're able to evaluate problems and stuff like that over the phone.

Michele Higgs: Oh, I see. Joyce wants to jump in with a question here.

Joyce Mortimer: Chris and Jeff, there are several of our centers, many of our centers have a range of operating platforms; everything from Windows, believe it or not, 95 to Windows 98, Windows XP. Is there something, I know that it's difficult to give a one-size-fits-all answer, but are there some non-financial policies and procedures that come to mind that you could suggest for centers so that they can reduce the threats to the smooth running of their centers, or the equipment?

Jeffrey Hill: OK. You want to get that one?

Chris Carbajal: This is Chris; you know, we've started these centers from scratch and what we've done is we've sort of standardized, like you mentioned, there's a wide variety of platforms that exist in a center. We try to make everything as consistent as possible so that it's easier for us to assess and evaluate. Like I said, we evaluate over the phone because pretty much all the PCs are the same and that doesn't necessarily mean it's just for your community, in our perspective, it's for all the communities. So you kind of see the issues that come up; you're very familiar with the setup.

For the community that already has a wide range of things, you know, the best way to eliminate or try to reduce issues that can happen is to try to make it consistent; and a lot of times it doesn't require a lot of cost. I'm not intimately familiar with the licensing rules, but a lot of times, for example, if you have licenses for Windows 2000 or Windows XP, you can still cross supply to other platforms, 98, 95 to where you may be able to just pick one that is universal, the license covers all of your machines, and apply it across the board. Again, it's just trying to make the

center as simple as possible from an administrative standpoint, and that's sort of how we approach it. I hope that answered the question a little bit.

Michele Higgs: OK, it sounds good.

I have a question, a couple of questions then I'll try to open this up from questions from callers time, do you, and I'm speaking then to Chris and to Jeffrey, have any ideas for say low-cost virus protection for these centers, firewalls? Often the issue is, you know, having those things in place and then the further issue, as Joyce mentioned earlier, is the financial end of things, something that's low-cost or free.

Jeffrey Hill: Right. There are a few, there are a few services out there, anti-virus software, that are free. Unfortunately, I guess it sort of depends on what the level of problems and kind of complications you're having. If you feel like for the most part, things run pretty smoothly, but you want that little bit of added protection, you can go out online and if you have an IT person, an IT specialist assisting you, they will generally be kind of familiar with those kinds of things.

Now, if you're having security issues very frequently, then unfortunately, there's not too much you can do to get around the cost. Now, it doesn't — if you buy long-term — longer term deals or longer term licenses like, you know, you'll commit to three or four years, but you can get a reduction in cost. Unfortunately, it will cost you something; but, like I said, that's if you know you're having a lot of issues.

In some places, like I think LaToya was saying, she hasn't had a lot of problems, with the satellite issue aside, in which case, you know, maybe, you don't need as dynamic an anti-virus system. You don't need to be paying \$100 a PC. You can get something that is free and will cover kind of most of your needs.

Unfortunately, there are just so many variations with computers, especially when you get, you know, there's 15, I think she mentioned they have 15 computers. Who knows how many users there are. It must be a ton. It's just, like everything else, everybody does something differently, a little bit, even the same things do things differently and you just never know what you're going to run into.

So it's sort of tough to get your hands around sometimes, but that's just kind of the net of it. But if you know the kind of question to ask your IT specialist, they can lead you in the right direction. If nothing else, get you started on something free. If that doesn't quite work for you then, maybe you can make a decision at that point, just kind of start with the lowest common denominator type thing.

Michele Higgs: OK, I see, I see.

Joyce Mortimer: I have one last question before we open it up, and that relates again to policies and procedures. What about cookies? What about the adolescents who know a little bit more about the computers, about the Internet and access some of the more popular sites? What would be or could be a general policy for centers to consider reducing threats to their equipment?

Chris Carbajal: I would say, you know, it's funny you bring it up because that is a difficult question. The average teenager nowadays knows more than most of us, and knows a lot of tricks around things. What we've sort of instituted in all of our places is a login procedure, essentially where it's not just an open computer. The resident must come in and login, and each resident or each user is given a login. I'm not saying that doesn't prevent problems completely because, you know, many times the teenagers can guess and figure out passwords.

Essentially it's where only people that are registered can access to get on and of course, if they're a resident or they're in the building that uses the computer regularly, they'll take the time

to get their password and remember it, and so it's generally not an issue. To me, that's the best way. Don't leave it quite wide open because then you'll never know what you're going to get. Once you open it up, it's open to everyone, whoever sits in front of it, and that's tough for when you get to people who have a little bit more knowledge, they're a little bit more knowledge to be dangerous, I guess I would say.

Michele Higgs: Absolutely right. So with that, I think I'm going to ask Tom to see if we have anyone on the line who has any questions. Tom, do we have anyone?

Operator: Thank you. The question-and-answer session is conducted electronically. If you'd like to ask a question, please do so by pressing the star key followed by the digit one on your touch-tone telephone. If you're using a speakerphone, please make sure your mute function is turned off to allow your signal to reach our equipment. Again, that's star one to ask a question.

We do have a question from Karen Heppler with Goodale Barbieri

Michele Higgs: Hi, Karen.

Karen Heppler: Hi, we started out with a lot of used equipment and since have upgraded to newer equipment, newer used equipment, should I say. What, do you have any suggestions as to how to get rid of the old non-functional computers, because nobody wants them. They're too old to donate to anyone and you cannot just put them in a landfill. So, do you have any suggestions as to how we can handle that situation?

Jeffrey Hill: Karen, you'll have to, this is Jeff Hill, you'll have to look. There should be some, I don't know. Where are you located?

Karen Heppler: In Spokane, Washington.

Jeffrey Hill: Spokane, Washington, there should be some, if you go online and look at "recycle old computers," there should be, like in Houston, there's a couple of places that actually recycle the materials and stuff like that, and will strip them down for some of the materials. I can look as we're online here. I can look and see if I can get you an answer in a second.

Karen Heppler: I know that I did have one service come and pick up some items, but they have to be functional. If they can't use them, then they charge you a considerable amount for equipment for a nonprofit that you couldn't afford to buy in the first place.

Jeffrey Hill: Right.

Karen Heppler: I mean to pay to have it hauled away is crazy.

Jeffrey Hill: Yes, ma'am, yes, ma'am, it is.

Michele Higgs: OK. Well, that's something that we can research then.

Joyce Mortimer: Now, I believe that, this is Joyce; I believe that Apple Computers and Dell are the two U.S. companies that are trying to help reduce the overflow of equipment, the waste equipment in the landfills. I don't have information really about what they do locally or how a center might go about getting that equipment to the manufacturer. I think that if you were to call the 800 Dell number, they might be able to give you some information.

Jeffrey Hill: Yes and Karen, I just did a quick search and there's a place called, it's www.recycletechs.com and they accept all PCs, all computers over 900 megahertz at no charge. Anything less than 900 MegaHertz are a \$4 fee to recycle. You may want to check with them.

Karen Heppler: OK, thank you very much.

Jeffrey Hill: You're welcome.

Karen Heppler: Bye.

Michele Higgs: Great. Thank you, Jeff. Thanks for your question, Karen. Tom, is anyone else on the line?

Operator: Yes, we have several questions left. We have one from Ann Winston with the Hawthorne Place Apartments.

Michele Higgs: Hello, Ann.

Ann Winston: Hello, hi, I have a question. We have a great computer lab here at Hawthorne, except we have several computers that are now not working, and I'm new here at Hawthorne. We were going to connect with a computer service company that was going to come out and take a look at our computers and take those that we need to get fixed.

My question is, in looking at these contracts because I'm looking at several companies, what do we need to especially look at before we contract with a company? Are there any free services out there that would do this for us without a charge?

Michele Higgs: That's a good question. Jeff, can you help with that one?

Jeffrey Hill: I don't know of any free services, necessarily. So, on that side, I mean you may be able to get a hold of one of those companies and see if any of them would donate some time, you know, give you some in-kind time on the thing.

As far as what to look at, I'm always wary if somebody's going to charge you more than \$150 to fix a computer.

Ann Winston: Wow, OK.

Jeffrey Hill: And, Chris, jump in here, the only reason being is that if you can get a new one for the \$300, \$400 range, it seems like that would be something to keep my eyes open on. Chris, what do you ...

Chris Carbajal: I agree, and one of the ways that it gets to that kind of number is, with a computer, you never know if the system is broken. You really don't know what you're getting into until you get into it. If they're going to quote you an hourly price, and it's \$50, \$30, \$40 an hour, it doesn't take you very long to get to \$150, \$200. Maybe if there are places that will come out and maybe do a quick assessment and they don't charge very much for that, and then they can give you an estimate of how much it would be to fix it, as opposed to just a blanket, hey, here are my three computers. OK, we're going to charge you \$40 an hour to fix them and you say, OK. Because then you may come back with a \$1,200 bill and then, you're kind of caught in the middle there.

That's kind of the only things I would be wary of. It is kind of a touchy situation especially if you're in a position where you're not, as you said, you just stepped in there, you're brand new, you're not exactly sure what has happened or been happening over the last year or so, so you don't know what the situation is with the computers at all.

So, I would just be kind of wary of those kind of things, just going into a situation where you're not really sure what the end cost will be and they're just going to kind of let you know once they're done.

Ann Winston: Yes, exactly. And there's a contract, also they want you to go into contracts and just to come out and do incremental servicing on a quarterly basis, that's kind of scary, too, because there's a cost for them to come out and kind of fix what they say they already said was wrong with them. Then an incremental contract, you know, prices and fees, which is really very large cost with ...

Jeffrey Hill: And I was going to say, that can be assessed most of the time, I say most of the time, I'm taking this from our perspective. I mean, if we're charging a monthly fee, it's pretty small, but then we're essentially saying we're going to keep it up every month so that nothing major happens.

Ann Winston: Right.

Jeffrey Hill: Now, if the fee that they're trying to charge is pretty large then, yes, I'd be wary of that as well because, you know, then, like you said, you'll get down a hole where, you've spent \$750 fixing the same computer three times. That clearly doesn't make any sense, you know, and you don't want to get into a contract where you're forced into that kind of thing.

Ann Winston: Right. Well, thanks.

Michele Higgs: I'm going to jump in real quick before you go, Ann, if you haven't already, and something I was going to mention at the end of the call, but I'll tell you about it now. Neighborhood Networks has a partnership with a group called Tech Soup and I would suggest going over to their Web site, which is techsoup.org, and see what kinds of services they might be able to offer. I also will mention to you that they will be participating in an event during Neighborhood Networks Week, and it is entitled, "Healthy and Secure Computing". Yes, it's a Web cast on that date, on the 27th of June, and I would encourage you to go check out the Neighborhood Networks Web site for details on that. It's going to be later in the week; you might be able to sign up for it.

Ann Winston: All right. Well, thank you.

Michele Higgs: You're very welcome.

Roland Liverpool: Joyce?

Joyce Mortimer: Yes.

Roland Liverpool: Roland Liverpool, I'd like to add two things that she might want to take a look at.

Michele Higgs: Go right ahead.

Roland Liverpool: For free service, local community colleges and universities have computer courses, I mean, programs. Students get credit for helping out a nonprofit organization to get credit for classes. You get the service for free because they're going to get credit for their program at the local university or college. So you can check with some of the local colleges and universities that have IT programs, in which students do some sort of an internship, you know, by helping an actual organization, church, school or something of that nature.

The second one is professional organizations that are in the computer and information technology field. Your area may have a local chapter and since these consist of professional people, and nonprofit organizations, one of the outreaches they provide is these services to other organizations, in churches and schools again for free because they are professional organizations and this is their way of giving back.

Michele Higgs: Great.

Joyce Mortimer: Now, Roland Liverpool, how are you? Do you have any idea where one might go to get informational templates or and the equivalent of consumers' unions, information about pricing for service level agreements? And in two sentences or less, can you explain what a service level agreement might have, a good one might have for a center?

Roland Liverpool: A service level agreement should consist of clearly what they are going to do in terms of providing services, upkeep, maintenance of both hardware and software, frequency of when they're going to revisit, what their on-call capability is, will they also involve remote access as well as a physical visit?

Then also more importantly, what is their track record? Investigate their history of providing this kind of service, you know, to other organizations, small businesses or whatever because how well they're going to perform to you is a good function of how well have they performed for someone else already?

Michele Higgs: OK, thanks. Thanks, Roland. That's very helpful.

Roland Liverpool: How much someone is charged varies because you get a thorough statement of work outlined for them to get an idea of what that "contract" is worth on say a retention basis, or an ongoing monthly retention basis. It's clearly spelled out, you know, what is involved, what you know, what contact with me and my organization would be on frequency, in terms of, I mean, what goes beyond the service agreement and now goes into work beyond the service agreement because it's very extensive?

So, you got to get a clear picture of what you're talking about so that you get an idea that when they quote you a price, is it, you know, is this really worth it? Then, of course, it gets into your budgetary situation. How much can you afford?

Michele Higgs: Great. I have a quick question for you Roland. You mentioned professional organizations. Folks in professional, I guess, IT organizations specifically. Is there a directory of organizations nationwide that folks might be able to access to find out whom in their area that might participate?

Roland Liverpool: Yes, probably the most comprehensive reference book in the library that you can find. It's called "The Gale Research Directory of Associations", and there's also "The Gale Research Directory of Directories". It narrows down to specific industries and subject matters so you can quickly go in and narrow down to only organizations that deal with, say, computer and information technology. Once you get there, in fact, there's a Gale Directory of Directories; directories that are specific to various industries. You will find a directory that's specific to just computers and information technology. Then from there, you could see whether or not they have chapters in your jurisdiction. You will find contact information, frequency of conferences, meetings, mission statement so you can get a pretty good idea.

Michele Higgs: That's perfect, that's perfect. Thanks so much. I'm going to go back to Tom and see if we have anyone else on the line?

Operator: Yes, we have a question from Cheryl Land with Cross Line Towers.

Michele Higgs: OK, Cheryl.

Cheryl Land: Hi, I just wanted to ask in regards to the software, if we were to put software on the server and then could it be fed to all the computers instead of independently downloaded to each one?

Michele Higgs: Sounds like one for the tech guys.

Jeffrey Hill: Cheryl, when you say, it's Jeff here, when you say "software", you mean can you install one Microsoft Word, what software specifically?

Cheryl Land: Yes, say if you wanted to do the Microsoft Office or something like that?

Jeffrey Hill: No, ma'am, you have to have a license for each PC you put that on.

Cheryl Land: OK, so if you had 10, you need to have one for 10 of them?

Jeffrey Hill: Yes, or you'll have to have, and they do have reduced prices, reduced license prices for nonprofit and stuff like that, but you to have a license for each individual PC that you that you put Microsoft Office on or any software program.

Cheryl Land: All right. OK. Thank you.

Jeffrey Hill: You're welcome. There's also volume discounts when you buy those. So if you buy 20 licenses, you know, it'll be a lot cheaper.

Cheryl Land: OK. All right. Thank you.

Michele Higgs: Thanks so much. I'm going to, we've got a little more time left, I'm going to go back to Tom to see if he has anyone else on the lines.

Operator: Yes, we have a question from Cindy Hale with Trails Helping Hands Neighborhood Networks Center.

Michele Higgs: Hi, Cindy.

Cindy Hale: Hi, Michele; how are you?

Michele Higgs: I'm good. How about you?

Cindy Hale: I'm fine. I have some information for the people who wanted to get rid of their old PCs.

Michele Higgs: Terrific.

Cindy Hale: So if they're too far to ship to me, because we have several PCs that I keep running. I just upgraded the memory. There's an organization called Free Cycle, F as in Frank, REE Cycle-dot-org. Every state has several cities that have this organization online. Nonprofit places that are looking for PCs will be watching there. If you have stuff to recycle, to just give away, you can post it and they will come and pick it up.

Michele Higgs: It sounds like a winner.

Cindy Hale: It works for us. We found several things to help our computer lab through them.

Michele Higgs: Excellent and Cindy's got a great computer lab. I just left her neck of the woods a few weeks ago, so I'm glad you called in with that information. Thanks so much.

Cindy Hale: You're welcome.

Joyce Mortimer: Can you also mention CompuMentor?

Michele Higgs: Oh, yes. I'm going to expand on the mention I made earlier from the Tech Soup organization. Again, they're a partner with us, and they a division of CompuMentor. If you go on

to their Web site and sign up, you'll be able to participate in their program as well. Do you want to expand on that, Joyce?

Joyce Mortimer: Well, software, hardware customer relations management software, the whole nine yards, they've got it there. You can get site licenses. I guess the end of the fiscal year for CompuMentor is June 30th. So if you need to load an application on 10 computers, get a site license for 10 computers, you will also have information at that Web site, details about Microsoft requirements.

Their fiscal year ends the 30th of June, you can order a license to load that software onto 10 machines and the new fiscal year begins July 1st, and so you can order another 10 if that's what you need.

Michele Higgs: Great. Thanks for that info. We'll go back to Tom to see if we have anyone else on the line AIMCO.

Michele Higgs: Hi, Richard.

Jim Nordine: Yes, this is Jim Nordine with Richard here; I maintain the computers. I have several things I'd like to contribute. One is, I have several volunteers that I have trained to do the defrag and run security checks and stuff on the computers daily and weekly or as required.

Recycling, the person before me I believe was talking about, there's a federal and a state program for recycling. Our biggest problem right now is recycling the CRT monitors. They've become surplus so fast that they're hazardous material. You can't throw them in the dump because they have lead in them plus it's a cathode ray tube that's explosive, and the nearest place for, well, I'm in the Woodlands outside of Houston. It's quite a ways away and to transport them down to that place, they don't pick them up, is a problem.

The other thing is working a program; we have, in cooperation with senior programs like Experience Works and the interfaith organization, where they have people that work with you to train for employment. It's an "I scratch your back, you scratch mine" type thing. They help us, but in the process I show them how to repair computers and take them apart and we get a lot of donations and we recycle them. That is, if they're older like Pentiums II's or older, we tear them down and we have a place that takes the mother boards. Of course, they refine the gold out of the mother boards and the power supplies and there's a market for that. We take it out to this electronic recycling place.

So if we can't use the parts, we recycle them.

Michele Higgs: Thank you. Thank you so much, Jim. Hopefully people are taking good notes from this.

We're getting a lot of good information.

I'm afraid, as I always seem to be lately, we've come very close to the very end of our call. Is there something that you wanted to say, (Joyce)? (Jim), have you finished your comment? OK.

Again, we've come to the end, and once again, I'm sorry.

Joyce Mortimer: Just one more question?

Michele Higgs: OK. One more, I'll check quick. Tom, do we have one more question out there? A real quick one.

Operator: I do not have any questions in the queue right now.

Michele Higgs: OK. It's serendipity. I have to tell you that this has been a fantastic call. I'm glad you all have been able to participate. Also, as a result there will be an addendum for the transcript this time, since there are some information Web sites and what not that might be interesting to you. Also, our speakers have very graciously agreed to give us their contact information to add to the transcript in the event that you had any additional questions, so look for that in about two weeks.

Next month's conference call is on Tuesday, July 17th, and that's also at 3 p.m., and it's on the topic, "Utilize Your Corporate Backyard Linking Your Neighborhood Network Centers to Big Business". We'll learn about building relationships and partnerships with corporations for your center.

I want to thank all of our speakers, LaToya, and Beverly, Angela, Jeffrey, Chris, and Roland, thank you so much for joining us today. I want to remind everyone about the resources that are available to you through the Neighborhood Networks Initiative aside from the Neighborhood Networks information line which is 888-212-2743. You'll find abundant resources and information on the Neighborhood Networks Web site at www.neighborhoodnetworks.org. I refer you to the Web site to find out information about our upcoming events, which is Neighborhood Networks Week, June 25th through 30th. As I mentioned earlier, there will be a special Web cast on Wednesday, June 27th featuring Tech Soup to discuss their Healthy and Secure Computing program. Later on in the week you should be able to register for that event using the Neighborhood Networks Web site.

Also, it's not too late to register your event for Neighborhood Networks Week. Last year we had more than 600 events take place. So if you register online, you can be counted in this year's number. Let us hear about your plans for your activity. This year's Neighborhood Networks Week will feature special event days such as Do It For You Day, Get Connected Day; and, of course, there's the Event Planning Guide, which is posted on the Neighborhood Networks Web

site, where there's lots of ideas for events and several resources you can use for events like internet scavenger hunt, crossword puzzle and so on.

The Neighborhood Networks Training Conference, National Training Conference, will take place in Washington, D.C., August 8th through 10th and pre-conference sessions and digital storytelling and grantwriting will take place on August 6th and 7th. Registration is currently available on the Neighborhood Networks Web site.

If you have any questions about either of these upcoming events, please ring the Neighborhood Networks information line at 888-312-2743 and the folks there can set you right.

Thanks again, LaToya, Beverly, Roland, Jeffrey, Chris, Angela, and Joyce Mortimer, who put a great deal of preparation into this call. Thank you so much for sharing with us today. Details will be available in the posted transcript. Thanks to all of you for joining us and we'll talk to you next time. Take care.

Operator: This does conclude today's conference call. We appreciate your participation. You may disconnect at this time.

END

Resources from June Conference Call

“Keep your Computers and Peripherals Running! Technology Tips and Tools”

Speakers:

Jeffrey Hill and Chris Carbajal – MyGait Software maintenance and training services geared to the needs of seniors.

jeff.hill@mygait.net

LaToya Shields – project manager and center director, Vince Salvagio Community Center in Houston TX

lshields@ulimainc.org

Beverly Murray – outreach coordinator and board president, Hickory Hollow Cooperative

murray7272@msn.com

Roland Liverpool – The Computer Doctor. Independent contractor and college IT instructor

rolandlive@hotmail.com

Links to Resources: listing below does not imply endorsement

Freecycle.org – Good for disposing of or finding used material and equipment. Free. Will pick up equipment.

Recycletechs.com – Will accept used equipment for recycling. 900 MHz and over are free, 900 MHz and less will be accepted for a fee of \$4—www.recycletechs.com

Avast! – Anti-virus protection – <http://www.avast.com/>

Spybot – Search & Destroy – Spyware protection-- <http://www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html>

LINUX – Operating system – <http://www.ubuntu.com/>

Gale Encyclopedia of Associations – A resource to find associations of IT professionals in your area.

Also a possible source of volunteer assistance. This resource is located at your local library.