The Frugal Way to Computing

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Some of my Idea's

- If I don't have to spend money and get the job done I am in.

- I am prepared to put a little work into learning so I don't have to be a part of the masses.

- The large companies are there to make money and they make a bunch, but not from me unless I really need them.

What I don't like

- Operating System and Computer Mfg.'s that put stuff on my computer or smart device just for their best interest. C

- The Changes format or hardware to require the purchase of new applications or equipment.

- Being told this is the only way. (Love to talk about this much more if you are interested)

- Paying for something that I can get for much less or free.

- Applications (Programs) that get in the way or prohibit my way of using my devices.

Discussion

- I am creating this Presentation because I had a customer say to me. "I did not know that was available, WOW !!"

- I will be discussing the things I have done to limit my computer and entertainment expenses and still have very secure equipment.

- I have done a few things to lower my cost's and will try to explain them here. I will talk about my Windows laptop and my Linux (Ubuntu) desktop and laptop computers.

More Discussion

- One of the early questions one needs to ask themselves – "Do I (you) have any software that only runs on one Operating System and are there alternatives that will work"

- In my case I have one application that I like to use and is best used on Microsoft Windows, all the other applications I use work on most, if not all other Operating Systems.

- I do have a Windows 11 Laptop computer so I can use my one application and also for reference when talking about Windows questions.

- That said, I use my Ubuntu Linux machine for 90% of all my work.

- If you are brave you can give Ubuntu a try without loading, it will run from a DVD to see how it works.

What is Open Source

- open-source

- ADJECTIVE

- denoting software for which the original source code is made freely available and may be redistributed and modified.

- This is something that many users don't have or understand or did not know existed.

- There are a number of ways to go and I list some of the license types in the next slide.

Open Source License

- GNU General Public License. Copy the Software: There's no limit to where you can copy that code. ...

- BSD License. BSD license is a part of a family of free software licenses that have much fewer restrictions in distribution as compared to other free software licenses

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Free is never really FREE !

- Free is really never truly Free. You may have to look at some advertisements or be notified from time to time to upgrade etc.

- If a user really likes an application then I am all in on purchasing it. Fact is some of the software I am going to talk about in this Presentation I have paid for and am very happy I did.

- There are application creators that will offer their software for free and then have a "Pro" version with more functions. The user must be aware that the creators need money to keep making their software, so I pay for the good stuff after I have found their software to be useful.

- When trying software be careful of the offers of "Trial" . This means after some time they are going to ask you for $$. Usually they will ask for a credit card.

How I go about it

- When I was learning computers I made many errors. I have worked through them and tried to learn what works for me. I am not suggesting you take the same route but, you might find something in this Presentation that fits your needs.

- This is the reason for Ratsupport.com and this is my way of giving back to society and am here to ease some of the pain of learning.

Ubuntu Linux

- 1. I use Ubuntu Linux for my main computing machine.

- Reason: Open Source, Not tied to major Mfg., Works Great, keeps up to date and secure and does not require $$ to upgrade.

- Warning: Although this operating system works great, it does require some command line operations from time to time to keep working and clean. It can also require command line commands to install some applications etc. I use Bing Search to find how to do many things.

- I have a desktop computer, my old windows laptop that I converted to Ubuntu because Win 11 did not work on my hardware anymore and I have converted my Win 10 desktop machine to Ubuntu Server (for testing and development).

- I do have a new Dell Laptop that runs Windows 11 as I need it for some of my special applications and to demonstrate to customers etc.

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Ubuntu Desktop

This is my main working computer Desktop.

Please note all the applications that I have in the Dock (launcher) at bottom of the screen.

The total cost of this machine is what I paid for the hardware 9 years ago.

I did pay $30.00 for one application to do my programming.

Save Money on Windows Machines

- Microsoft does supply a Anti-Virus software with their Operating system. It is called Windows Security (Was Windows Defender) at no extra charge.

- I choose to use a couple of "Free" applications to supplement my system.

- I use Superantispyware and Malwarebytes that both can be free to a personal user (I do pay for both as I found them very helpful).

- I use LibreOffice for my office software and it does things that are difficult with other software's. One of my favorite things is I convert my documents and Presentations (This one made with LibreOffice Impress) to the universal .PDF format. I keep the original copy in the Open Document Format of .ODP for presentation and .ODT for documents. It is very easy to convert formats to others.

- Fact is. Many times I have had users that have a windows document that was in the wrong format and I have been able to load that document and change format to something they could use.

- By the way LibreOffice is Open Source (Free, they do ask for donations).

Streaming

- What is Streaming: a method of transmitting or receiving data (especially video and audio material) over a computer network as a steady, continuous flow, allowing playback to start while the rest of the data is still being received.

- I use Streaming to get my TV and other content to my devices, TV's, Tablet, Smart Phone and Computers.

Save on TV Programming

- The following discussion will depend on your income and wants and wishes.

- In both the internet and TV many companies have stuck their hand into the pie and if you pick and choose you can get what you want at lower prices than you are currently paying.

- The following is how I took about $120.00 off my TV and Internet and still get what I want to watch.

- There are limits and restrictions so I suggest you do your homework before traveling down the path I am about to discuss.

Save on TV Programming

- In today's world there are many ways to get the TV programming you like without having to pay large $$ and get a bunch of stuff you will never watch but you still pay for it.

- Cable Companies and others, like to have you pick a package and charge you for the package that may or may not have the programming you enjoy.

- There are now ways to avoid the charges for programming you don't use. See my next slide and I will explain.

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More on Save on TV Programming

- I changed my Cable Company package to internet only and I get 600Mbps speed for about $60.00/month ($50.00 with one year contract).

- I have either purchased or have Fire TV sets or Fire TV sticks ($30.00 to $55.00) for my TV sets. These are streaming devices from Amazon.

- You can also use your Xbox or Play Station and others if you already have them.

- Just by the purchase of these devices (a 1 time charge) I get many of the programs I like to watch although I don't get my golf, baseball or football.

- For these I choose FuboTV for about $65.00 to $100.00/month depending on plan and I get all the sports I could ever want. I did look at Sling TV for this but to get all the programming I wanted it cost more than FuboTV.

- It is important for you to do some homework so you can pick the application that best fits your viewing habits.

Even More on TV

- This change in my Cable Company account saved me more than $100.00/month

- There are a number of devices that you can purchase or may already have that offer the same as I talked about.

- Roku, Nvidia Shield TV, Amazon Fire TV Cube, Apple TV, Google Chromecast and of course your Playstation and Xbox One to name a few, there are probably others I have not mentioned.

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Save on Internet

- There are ways to save money on your internet.

- ACP is a government program that can reduce your internet cost by $30.00/month if you qualify.

- There are other things in the program that you might like to see. You can go to the government site in the link above and check it out.

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Save Money on Internet

- Don't pay for what you don't need is my moto.

- Ok internet suppliers like to talk about speed and other things to get you to purchase packages that you just don't need.

- As an example, I am one person here and I do stream my TV and do many downloads for my programming and the Xbox One Games I play. For this reason I am on a 600 Mbps plan but, If I were at home and only had a couple of people using the internet without streaming then a 25 Mbps, 50 Mbps or even 10Mbps would do just fine and cost less if you have basic needs like email and web browsing.

- Please remember your internet speed is controlled by the slowest device or connection in your system. Updating your Modem/Router will not speed up your internet speed if the internet adapter is at it's max.

- I recommend nothing less than 25 Mbps for Streaming and then only one stream at a time.

There are more Ways to Save

- If you ever look at your cable or phone company bill (Internet) you will see a monthly charge for a modem/router and they tell you that you need their device to take full use of their services.

- These charges can be in the area of $15.00 to $20.00 per month ($180.00/year or more).

- I suggest you make a one time purchase of your own Modem/Router and not pay year after year.

- Now please realize that the cost of this device could be in the $100.00 to $200.00 range depending on what your needs are.

- My point is: if I started with Company X and paid $15.00/month for their Modem/Router over 10 years the cost to me would be about $1,800.00 but if I purchased my own the cost would be the original $200.00.

Save With a Smart Home

- When I talk about Smart Home, I am talking about a home with smart devices and using Alexa or Google Home to control them.

- If you don't know what Alexa or Google Home are then you can click on the links and get an idea.

- So you understand where I am coming from, I am a big Amazon Fan (even if they are big) and I like their devices etc.

- I am only going to talk about my Alexa and Alexa Echo Devices but Google Home has similar devices and an application that works almost the same .

- I have the following list of devices at my home that I use each and every day. (see next slide)

My Devices

- I have a Amazon Smart Thermostat (requires specific wiring) that PG&E gave a rebate on my purchase. (Alexa aware)

- I have two Amazon Echo Shows (has camera that can see and will display things) and other Echo Devices, can call and see customers and family so you could call it a video phone.

- My Android phone has the Alexa App and my Fire TV devices also use Alexa.

- I have about 7 Light Fixtures (Bulbs) that are Alexa aware so I can control them via Voice or my Phone.

- I have some smart plugs that are Alexa aware and I control some equipment in my house. I have a small space heater that I can turn on and off by voice and a routine on Alexa turns it off after 2 hrs of runtime.

- I also have a couple of Amazon Blink Camera's that I can use for security and give my smart phone a tingle when someone or something gets close to my house.

Quickly how I save

- I have the ability to change my Thermostat no matter where I am, so I can reduce my AC/Heat operation when I am away from home.

- I can turn on or off my lights to simulate someone being at home when I am gone and also turn on my porch lights when I get home. I don't have to leave them on while gone and as a added benefit the lamps can be dimmed so they use less energy.

- I also have Blink Camera's that see motion and capture images so I have basic home security. This does not cost as much as most home security systems.

- I also save by not having to get up and down and find remotes as I can ask Alexa to turn on my Game Console or TV's with a Voice Command.

- These may seem small but over time these all save $$, but all took some initial expense.

More Discussion

- Not all users will find this information useful but, if you do Enjoy.

- If you have questions please feel free to contact us at Ratsupport.com

- If you know another way to save with your computer or smart devices system etc. Please let us know so we can share.

- I don't know if you noticed but I usually choose to not use any main stream stuff as I feel most are spying on us. That said, all can not be avoided so it is up to the user to be aware.

- If you have questions on Smart Home, please feel free to contact us and we can provide much more info. This is a changing world and keeping up to date is tough.

V P N

- Short for Virtual Private Network, a VPN creates a secure connection between you and the internet. It provides you with an extra layer of privacy and anonymity, so you can:

- Hide your internet activity and location to avoid being tracked (especially on public WiFi networks)

- Freely browse the internet without constraints

- Browse safely and anonymously with no speed throttling

- If you feel you are being spied on or feel insecure you can always use a VPN on your internet connections. Here is a link for more information.

Happy Endings

I hope you found this information useful and will enjoy the information.

Please feel free to Contact Us at Ratsupport.com if you have any questions or comments.

See our WeMe Page and follow us, as we will be adding content on a regular basis.