LIKE US ON facebook.   Follow Us On twitter

vol. 16 | iss. 2

PTD CHAT

Partner in Business

BerkOne

Berkheimer OneSource began in 1936 when its original parent company started a debt collection business in Bangor, Pennsylvania. Recognized by local tax jurisdictions for its efficiency, H. A. Berkheimer was asked to collect local taxes for municipalities and school districts. In the 1960's, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted laws allowing municipalities and school districts to levy an "earned income tax" and privatized its collection. H. A. Berkheimer (HAB) immediately entered that business and grew to be the largest single private collector of earned income tax (EIT) in Pennsylvania.

In the 1980's, HAB made major investments in information technology to modernize tax collection processes and adopted data base and imaging technologies. To collect the large influx of EIT returns in the first and second quarter of each year, HAB built IT-based capacity to efficiently handle these annual peaks. Recognizing that the idle IT processing power could benefit other companies in the off-peak periods, HAB entered the imaging and IT services business in the 1990's. By 2003, the imaging and IT services business grew large enough to split off into a separate company which does business today as BerkOne, Inc.

As it provided document scanning, data entry and IT processing services to clients, BerkOne integrated a broader range of technologies into their daily operations. Clients began to appreciate BerkOne's ability to design creative solutions to business problems and asked BerkOne to help create on-premises solutions for them. Today, the solutions business is the most rapidly growing segment of BerkOne's business. They integrate hardware from various vendors with both commercially available software and BerkOne created software to meet specific client requirements. BerkOne has implemented a full range of projects from inbound mailroom design and configuration through complex multi-site integrations with enterprise system conversions in short timelines. Since BerkOne is an experienced high volume end user of the various platforms, they know how to make these solutions perform in their clients' environments.

Why would a company like BerkOne need and choose PenTeleData? Richard Smith, BerkOne Manager of Technical Services explained, "While the core of BerkOne's service to our clients is the smart application of technology to improve the productivity, quality and efficiency of their operations, BerkOne is not a telecommunications carrier. We need a reliable telecom partner to deliver the telecom infrastructure that enables BerkOne and our clients to communicate 24/7/365.

"BerkOne was using another provider's MPLS circuits for our Internet service. An exploratory conversation with PenTeleData led BerkOne to conclude that it was time to replace those MPLS circuits, for both performance and monetary reasons. When we made the switch to PenTeleData, we got much more bandwidth for a fraction of the cost.

PenTeleData.

In this issue

Manager's Desk...

Dear Valued Customers,

Another scam warning recently made news headlines, so please be alert. This one doesn't involve the Internet, but it does involve telephone calls. If you have Caller ID, then it's probably best not to answer unknown or questionable numbers when you receive them. After all, if it's important, the caller will leave a message. If you do answer, then you need to know about a scam that made headlines and prompted Pennsylvania authorities to issue warnings in late 2016.

Dubbed as the "Can you hear me?" scam, it's not a Verizon commercial. It's the latest scheme to make you a potential victim. The "can you hear me" con is actually a variation on earlier scams aimed at getting the victim to say the word "yes" in a phone conversation. That affirmative response is recorded by the criminal and used to authorize unwanted charges on a phone bill, utility bill or credit card.

Callers may identify themselves as a government agency, such as the IRS, Department of Motor Vehicles, a court system, or Social Security. They may also give the name of another business you use, but the scam is to use the idea of "authority" to make you convince you to keep talking. The longer you do, the more likely it is that you'll say something that will allow them to make you a victim. No matter what the question, a reasonable response is to hang up (the best choice other than not answering at all) or ask, "Who are you and why do you want to know?" This is true for any question, including "Are you the homeowner?"; "Can you hear me?"; or "Are you the person who pays the utility bills?"

While you may feel it impolite to hang up, it's a much better strategy than saying "yes". Even if you don't provide a payment method, the con artist already has your phone number and may try to pass along third-party charges to your phone provider. In some cases, they may already have your personal information from another means, so it makes it easy to use your recorded "yes" to validate charges.

For more monthly security topics, please visit www.ptd.net/contest. You may even win some great prizes!

As always, we're available 24/7 to answer your questions and concerns at 1.800.281.3564 or via our online chat support at www.ptd.net.

Thank you for your business and continued support.

Best regards,
Jaime Mendes,
Vice-President of Operations, PenTeleData

BerkOne Continued

"One of our requirements was bandwidth redundancy between our two Lehigh Valley data centers in Bethlehem and Bangor. Because of their proximity, a network outage could affect both of them. PenTeleData provisioned us on their multi-tiered network that guarantees different paths for our data and guards against a simultaneous multi-site outage.

"Our initial installation of PenTeleData services included DIA circuits and a Point-to-Point private circuit between our Lehigh Valley data centers. The install and setup of the equipment for these services was planned accordingly and implemented as expected. Conversion from our former provider to PenTeleData went very smoothly with no issues or unexpected outages."

PenTeleData provides the telecommunications support BerkOne needs to service their clients and support all of their employees. BerkOne also supports Berkheimer Tax Administrator's 30+ tax offices throughout Pennsylvania using PenTeleData's network.

With this in mind, it's no surprise that reliability is a necessity. Mr. Smith commented about his experience with PenTeleData. "Since BerkOne has been using PenTeleData, we have experienced only one major service interruption. A moving train accidentally hit some drooping telecom cables. This was a huge outage that affected many telecom carriers, not just PenTeleData, but because of their online support and service representatives, we were informed and provided appropriate updates to our management and clients until the outage was repaired.

"Fortunately, BerkOne does not need to contact PenTeleData for support very often. I recall contacting them once with suspected Internet issues. PTD's tech support helped determine the actual cause which was completely unrelated to the PTD Internet circuit."

Michael Miller, BerkOne Director of Technical Services added, "We recently contracted through PenTeleData to install service from another provider for our new Syracuse data center. Working with a remote telecom provider can be difficult, but fortunately PenTeleData facilitated the installation process. Leveraging our trusted relationship with PenTeleData allowed us to focus on other project tasks.

"BerkOne's top goals for the future are successful integration of our recent acquisitions and continued profitable growth, particularly in our solutions business. As we position ourselves to grow, we know that we must stay ahead of business automation technology trends and hire great people so that we can continue to deliver exemplary service to our clients."

PenTeleData is proud to serve BerkOne with nearly 10,000 miles of fiber optic cabling and is prepared to support their growing business with our NextGen Network, which provides less signal degradation, easier performance upgrades, greater speeds and more opportunities, including Quality of Service, DDoS Mitigation, Optical Wave Services, IPv6, and Layer 2 VPNs.

Home Security from Our Partner Cable Companies

Would you like to be able to monitor your property, keep your loved ones safe and stay connected to your home and family from anywhere you are? With a home security package from one of our partners, you can!

Features and benefits may include:

> 24/7 remote access to your smart home system using any Internet connected device, with the ability to arm and disarm your system, adjust your thermostat and lights, watch video clips and check your windows and doors.

> 24/7 security monitoring that can include video cameras, window and door sensors, and a panic button. If an alarm signal is received, notification to either you or emergency services are dispatched based on your customized alert selections.

> A full color, interactive touch screen control center of your system that enables you to operate your system and interact with your home.

> Email or text alerts to keep you informed when events happen.

For more information about how to make your home more secure, contact the PenTeleData partner cable company that serves your area.

PenTeleData Community Wi-Fi at Musikfest

Summer is just around the corner, so we thought that it would be a good time to think about the summer events we love the most.

You may remember that PenTeleData and Service Electric provided Community Wi-Fi at Musikfest. Service was provided through a trial run for community Wi-Fi with hopes of expanding it throughout our footprint. Doing so could potentially open an opportunity to join a consortium that would allow regional and/or national Wi-Fi roaming capabilities to our customers.

We later sent out a survey to find out why people used the Wi-Fi. The top three answers were social media, to see what was happening at Musikfest and to check the weather. Other responses were to search for nearby attractions, play Pokémon Go, check traffic routes, inquire about Bethlehem steel history, gaming, and to look for lodging.

Here are some other interesting facts: The age category with the most users was 46-65 years, followed by 31-45 years. When asked where the Wi-Fi users resided, we received responses of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Texas, New Mexico and even California!

540 Delaware Avenue | PO Box 197
Palmerton, PA 18071
www.penteledata.net | www.ptd.net | 1.800.281.3564

PenTeleData

Get the Most Out of Your Home Wi-Fi Network

Perhaps your browsing speed seems to be slowing to a crawl or you can't stream a video you'd really like to watch. Maybe you work from home, so it's vital to you that your connection to the Internet is strong and uninterrupted. Maybe between your families' tablets, wireless phones, gaming systems, TVs and computers, good Wi-Fi is essential to your household, but has become less than great.

There are many reasons why your connection may be less than ideal, but some of the most likely can be simple to fix, without costing you a dime. Even if everything seems to be working well, keep these tips in mind to get the most out of your home Wi-Fi Network:

Where should the wireless router be located? It may be tempting to place your router inside a cabinet and out of the way or next to a window where the cable comes into your home, but that may not be best. A wireless router needs open spaces, away from walls and obstructions. If your wireless router has external antennas, orient them vertically to bump up coverage and if it's possible, elevate the router too.

What's the frequency, Kenneth? If you have a dual-band router, you'll likely get better performance from the 5GHz band instead of the more common 2.4GHz band. This can be changed in your router's administrator interface.

What channel are your using? Just like the walkie-talkies some of us used as kids, all modern routers are multichannel. They can switch across different channels when communicating with your devices. Most of us use the default channel, but if neighboring wireless networks are using the same, it can cause signal congestion. You can change the channel in your wireless network's administrator interface, typically under the basic wireless setting category.

Does your router need a firmware update? Router manufacturers are always tweaking software to increase performance and speed. Depending on the manufacturer and model, most current routers have the update process built into the administration interface, so it's just a matter of selecting the firmware upgrade button. Others may require you to find and download the firmware from the manufacturer's website.

Is your hardware obsolete? If the wireless router is running on old hardware, you won't receive the best performance. If your router is a few years old, it is probably still using the 802.11g or older standard. The maximum throughput for 802.11g is 54 Mbps. The more modern 802.11n is capable of 300 Mbps and the latest, 802.11ac goes up to 1 Gbps. Contrary to the old adage, it may be time to consider a replacement, even if the router isn't broken. In addition, your PC may need an adapter to be compatible with newer routers.

Are you in control of your router's priorities? Most modern routers come with Quality-of-Service tools to limit the amount of bandwidth that apps use. That way, if you are video streaming or using Voice over IP, you can make sure they have priority over your teenager watching YouTube videos. These settings are typically under the advanced settings in the network administrator's interface.

Could your antenna be the problem? Would you benefit from a wireless range extender? Routers are only capable of broadcasting reliably up to a certain distance, after that, the signal gets weak. If your area is large, or if there are thick walls or other physical structures that block signals, you may need a wireless range extender. It looks similar to a router, but works differently. A wireless range extender picks up the existing Wi-Fi signal from your wireless router and rebroadcasts it. It needs to be close enough to the main router to pick up a good signal.

Do you need additional access points? Access Points can be costly, but work together to create a mesh network in which each unit transmits signals to each other. This solution is best if you are covering a large space, like multiple floors or separate buildings.

Fun Facts

Some bacteria are actually resistant to the temperature of boiling water (100 degrees C.). To kill all the bacteria, you need to raise the temperature to about 121 degrees C. To get water to this temperature, you must heat it under pressure.

A polar bear's head is oblong and relatively small compared to body size. The muzzle is elongated with a "Roman-nosed" (slightly arched) snout. Polar bears have 42 teeth, which they use for catching food and for aggressive behavior. Polar bears use their incisors to shear off pieces of blubber and flesh.

The chicken sandwich: In 1946, Atlanta restaurant owner Truett Cathy created an alternative to the hamburger when he placed a piece of boneless grilled chicken inside a bun and dubbed it the "Chick-fil-A." Now more than 70 years and 1,500 restaurants later, Chick-fil-A's slogan is, "We didn't invent the chicken, just the chicken sandwich."

It only takes 45 minutes for 99% of the caffeine to be absorbed through the body's membranes. In humans the half-life for caffeine is anywhere from 2.5 to 4.5 hours, which explains why the average energy drink or coffee's effect lasts about 2 to 3 hours.

Oddly enough, Coca-Cola, the world's most recognized soft drink, was introduced in 1886 – one year later than a multi-flavored carbonated concoction called Dr Pepper. In 1885, a pharmacist named Charles Alderton was experimenting with several fruit-based flavors at the soda fountain and came up with a new drink.

WINNER

January 2017 Contest Winner

Congratulations to Kristina Sullivan of Kunkletown, PA.
Kristina was the winner of a Family 4-Pack of tubing passes to Blue Mountain Ski Area in Palmerton.

QUESTION: If you had only one match and went into a VERY cold and dark room, what would you light first...the oil lamp, the wood fire, or the gas stove? ANSWER: the match