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M & H CONSULTING

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Internet Connections: Getting What You Paid For

How fast is your internet connection? Most businesses are not only unsure of what their internet speed is, but they also have no idea what their monthly internet bill comes to. When M&H Consulting does evaluations for our new clients, one of the most common things we find is that our client is paying way too much for their internet connection, or could be getting faster speeds at no additional cost.

Recently, many internet service providers upgraded their systems allowing for faster connection speeds at no additional cost to the customer. In typical big business fashion however, the speed was only increased if the customer called to request it. Moreover, as prices have gone down for internet connec-

tions, the providers do not automatically decrease the pricing for the current clientele unless they get a specific request to do so. So how can you avoid the trap of paying too much for a slow internet connection? Test your speed, and call your provider.

Two of the most prominent sites for testing your internet speed are:
<http://www.dslreports.com>
and
<http://bandwidthplace.com>

Go to either of these sites and follow the on-line instructions to see what the speed of your internet connection is. You will want to run this test while nobody is using the internet connection, or at least while it is during a slow period. Once you have gotten the results of the test, make a

note of them and call your internet provider. They will be able to tell you what speed you are paying for, and whether or not there are faster speeds available at the same price. If the speed you are supposed to be getting does not match what your test demonstrated, then the provider is obligated to correct it. It would also be wise to contact other internet service providers in your area to compare pricing. Be sure to compare apples to apples, or in this case, upload/download speeds to upload/download speeds.

An M&H technician can assist you with these simple tests, and a ½ hour spent by one of our technicians can often times save your business hundreds to thousands of dollars per year on your internet connection.

TAKE \$\$\$CASH\$\$\$ FROM M&H CONSULTING

Refer a new client to M&H Consulting and mention this offer to us, and you will receive \$25 for each PC the new client has. Call for details.

Microsoft Office, For Free???

What is the best way to compete with a \$400+ software product? Give it away. Sun Microsystems and volunteer programmers around the world are teaming up to do just that.

In its first incarnation, OpenOffice was not much competition for Microsoft Office. It had problems opening some word documents properly, the spreadsheets couldn't be as big as Excel, and it had no database program to compete with Access. Since the only purpose this software served initially was to accompany Sun's computer systems and not to compete with Microsoft, the limitations were not a priority.

With a new release of OpenOffice, many of these bugs and limitations are resolved. As in the first version, the look and feel of the programs are very similar to their Microsoft counterparts. Menu headings in Write, OpenOffice's word processor, are almost identical to Word. Also, the troubles opening Microsoft office files are fixed - they open perfectly. There is also a database program, and although the interface

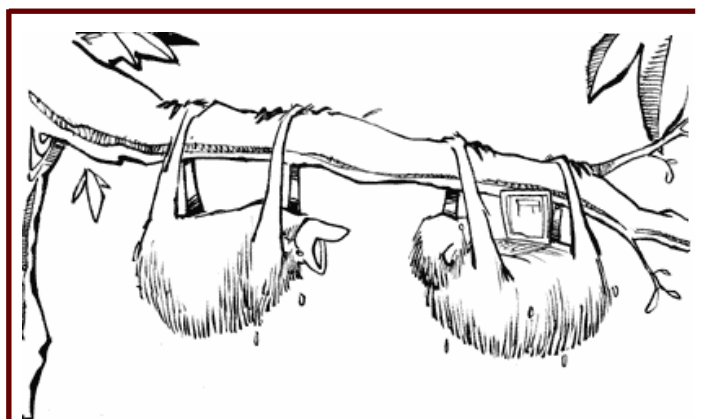
is a bit confusing, Access is not much better. One interesting feature of Write is the ability to save as a PDF - a feature unavailable from Microsoft Office.

While this does seem like a great deal for the money (in this case free), there are some drawbacks. Opening and saving a file can take up to twice as long in OpenOffice as opposed to Microsoft Office. For most people this will not amount to much - it may take four seconds to open a spreadsheet instead of two. However, those people who have older computers or very large files may feel the difference more. Also the

help files for all programs are not as comprehensive as those for Office.

Still being in Beta, the software is not quite ready for the masses. But from what can be seen from this release, there will be a much more substantial competitor to Microsoft's Office on the market than there has been in years. While the help documentation may leave something to be desired, no one can argue with what it brings to the table for the price - FREE!

If you would like some help trying out a free version of the OpenOffice software, call us at M&H Consulting for more information.



"You're a sloth! Why do you need broadband?!?"