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Alternatives to Microsoft Office - for many of us, paying for a yearly subscription to Microsoft Office may no longer be the best option. There are several free office suites available. While they may not provide all the features of Microsoft Office they probably provide more than enough features for our needs. And they are all compatible with Microsoft Office meaning that if you have Microsoft Office files, you can open them in these programs and, if you send a file created in these programs to someone who uses Microsoft Office, they will be able to open and work with them.
Libre Office - https://www.libreoffice.org/
Open Office - https://www.openoffice.org/
WPS Office (free version available) - https://www.wps.com/
Free Office (Windows and Linux) - http://www.freeoffice.com/en/
          also mobile version for Android phones
Google Docs - can be set up to work on files without Internet access

Telephone calls from unknown numbers - seems to be an increase in the number of phone calls that are being made from unknown numbers, both with local and non-local area codes as well as private callers. One member mentioned receiving a call where caller id showed 20 numbers but when the individual started leaving a message he recognized the caller's voice and answered the call. Most agreed that we try to monitor calls and avoid answering calls from unknown numbers.

Home security - briefly discussed home security cameras. Some of the more well-known brands are Canary, Ring, Netgear Arlo. Features vary, e.g., indoor only, cloud storage for videos (often monthly fee), apps for controlling camera and viewing videos, multiple camera capability, night vision, two-way talk. Lesser known manufacturers may be a viable option at less cost. If looking for a home security camera, regardless of brand, carefully check features and reviews. One member is using WyzeCam indoor security camera which has many of the features of the more expensive brands and offers 14 day free cloud storage but only works with app on mobile device so requires having a cell phone or tablet.

Note: Amazon recently purchased Ring doorbell.

Cell phone plans - There are many options for cell phone plans. Main criteria in choosing a plan should be what provider has the best coverage where you will be using the phone most (may be where you live or where you travel). Three main uses for cell phone are voice calls, texts, and data (not in that order). Will cell phone be used to replace landline or when traveling and don't have access to another phone? Will it primarily be used for texting? How much data - email, Internet, GPS. Getting one phone or multiple? In many cases a family plan with a major carrier may be the best option.

If only getting one or two phones, primarily for talk and text, Straight Talk could be an option - recently came out with a 30 day service plan with unlimited talk, text and 2 Gb data for $35. Have to renew every 30 days but can set up automatic renewal and can also purchase multiple service plan cards and enter them "in reserve" and one will automatically be added when the previous service plan expires. There is no carryover of unused data.

One or two phones for limited use - might consider TracFone which offers service plans of 30 days up to 365 days and the number of talk minutes, texts and data depends on the plan. The 365 day plan with 1500 minutes talk, 1500 texts, and 1.5 Gb data is $125.00 (about $11.00/month). Unused minutes/texts/data carry over, as long as a new service plan is added before the current one expires. As with Straight Talk, can set up automatic renewal or add service plans in reserve. Can also purchase cards with text only (1000 texts for $5) or data only (1 Gb data for $10).

Another option to consider is talking to your children or siblings about adding a phone under their plan. The shared cost might be less expensive than getting your own plan.

When purchasing a phone, especially an Android phone, make sure it has at least 16 Gb storage and is a recent version of Android (currently Marshmallow 6.0 or Nougat 7.0) as many Android phones do not receive version updates, even when purchased through a major carrier. Also, if not purchasing a phone directly from the carrier, make sure it will work with the carrier you need. In the US - Sprint, Verizon and US Cellular use CDMA; AT&T and T-Mobile use GSM. But a phone may be "locked" to a specific carrier so, even if a phone is, for ecample, CDMA, that doesn't mean it will work or work equally well with all of the CDMA carriers.

Favorites in Edge browser - You may have a few web pages that you look at often and don't want to have to search for them or type in the address every time. In the Edge browser, when viewing a web page, there is a star icon at the end of the address bar. Click on that star and you will prompted to save the address in Favorites. Click Add. Next time you want to view that page, click on the star with three lines in the top right of the Edge browser window. A drop-down window displays. (If you don't see Favorites listed, click on the star icon at the top of the drop-down window.) Click on the page you want to view. As you start accumulating Favorites, there are other options for organizing them.

Watching DVD on Windows 10 - Windows 10 computer has a DVD drive but doesn't seem to have any software for watching movies. Several people suggested VLC Media Player -
 https://www.videolan.org/vlc/
When clicking on Download link on that site, a new page opens which has links to several other products. Do not click on those links, wait a minute or so and the download you want shoudl begin. If it doesn't, in small print there are the words
"Thanks! Your download will start in few seconds...
If not, click here"
click the words "click here" and a list of alternate download sites will be displayed.

Windows Updates - week of Feb 12 - 2 different computers, screen was black, power light was on, and no indication that computer was sleeping, but tried moving mouse, pressing Enter key and no change. Finally held down power button to shut computer off and on restart on one computer it indicated it was installing updates. On second computer it took several minutes of circle rotating before it indicated updates were being installed and, before opening to desktop, the activity light turned orange, which on that computer indicates it is sleeping. Pressed power button and it turned blue which indicates computer is awake and it did some more processing before finally opening to desktop. It appeared exactly as it was when I last was working on it, e.g., Google Chrome opened to a specific website, File Explorer was still open.

Adding user account when setting up new computer or adding additional account to existing computer
Still possible to create user as local account rather than Microsoft account. However, Microsoft keeps changing how to do it. When setting up computers for other people, may not know their Microsoft account, or they may not have one. By default the first account added to a new computer will be an administrator account and additional accounts will be standard accounts. When setting up new computer, it is suggested to add an administrator account and then to add a standard account for the user(s). In order to add the first account, had to click prompt "add an offline account" or "create an offline account" don't remember exact wording. When adding additional user, Microsoft still wants accounts to be Microsoft accounts and the prompt to get by that is "I don't have this person's sign-in information" then "Add a user without a Microsoft account". Those prompts are not prominently displayed so you have to look for them and they seem to change every time a new versions of Windows 10 comes out so just have to look at the screen carefully when adding new accounts.

An account can be converted to an administrator account but the process has to be done from another administrator account. An administrator account can also be converted to a standard account but there always has to be at least one administrator account.

When using a local account and accessing some Microsoft services, you may be asked to sign in with your Microsoft account and be encouraged to switch your local account to Microsoft account, but can work around this by selecting prompt to "Sign into just this app instead."

Two-factor authentication - out of town and needed to log into site from a notebook computer that hadn't used to access that site before. Site requires 2-factor authentication when logging in from a new device. Was set up to email the code but didn't have that email account set up on the computer and couldn't remember the password for that email account. So, when setting up two-factor authentication to an email account, make sure you can access that e-mail account.

Switching email accounts - helping someone switch to a new email address. Required logging into several websites and changing the email address but some sites would not allow changing the login name (i.e., old email address) but email address for receiving communications and notifications was a separate item and that could be changed to the new email account. It was also possible to change recovery email and 2-factor authentication. In one case, login was so old that 2-factor authentication was set up to a really old email/password that the individual hadn't used in years so was a challenge to get that changed. Another problem was that the sites require changing the password at least once a year so that would be good time to check recovery email address and 2-factor authentication information. Understand it can be a challenge to change password even once a year. Don't even remember all the devices some

accounts are used on, e.g., Microsoft account. But for really important accounts, changing password should be considered.

If using text messaging for 2-factor authentication, make sure you are using the phone number through your cell phone service provider and not a phone number assigned to a text messaging application as those send messages unsecured over wi-fi. Major cell phone carriers are working on a more secure SMS text message process.

Miscellaneous
Anyone using VPN?

Has anyone participated in computer training sessions at the Library or Senior Services? Sessions at Senior Services, Trailside Center - individual assistance team up with high school student - Cyber-Seniors curriculum - 4 week series.

Windows cumulative updates - is it necessary to log into every user account on computer when receiving these updates?

Exerpt from an email received from someone who has an att email address. He recently got a phone from Verizon and they encouraged him to get a gmail email address and stop using his att email address: "Verizon informed me today that Verizon recently bought Yahoo and that is contributing to some issues with service and I was told there's no "fix" intended and it's best to go with something consistent, like gmail, since it's slim somebody would have the $ to buy them."

Keyboard works for login but not after
Was able to enter password on log in screen on Windows 10 computer but then unable to enter text on Cortana search or in any application, e.g., Notepad, Edge browser. Was able to use the on-screen keyboard to type but needed to get to the root of the problem.

Was pretty sure it wasn't the keyboard, but as a check, connected the keyboard to another computer and it worked fine.

Internet search led to some references to the "filter keys." in Ease of Access which can be found on the login screen in the lower right corner and in the settings options after one has logged in. If the filter keys are turned ON, can type but have to hold each key down for a second or more for it to appear on the screen. So, turned filter keys to OFF, and was able to type normally.

In 'Settings', 'Keyboard' there is a toggle switch under the heading ; "Turn On Filter Keys when Right-Shift is pressed for more than eight seconds"; default setting is 'ON';

Search for Ease of Access - scroll to and click - "Make the keyboard easier to use". If "Turn on Filter keys" is checked, uncheck it and click Apply. Then click "Set up Filter Keys" - if checked, uncheck "Turn on Filter Keys" and uncheck "Turn on Filter Keys when right SHIFT is pressed for 8 seconds", click Apply.
https://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_10-hardware/keyboard-not-working-after-login-windows-10/74cb3bec-735b-4510-a063-190e0498bdc3?auth=1