

Larry's newsLETTER



Techie Term:

802.11n

802.11n is a wireless (Wi-Fi) standard that was introduced in 2007. It supports a longer range and higher wireless transfer rates than the previous standard, 802.11g.

New Laws to Regulate your Online Life

In one of many new year's traditions, all across the U.S., hundreds of new laws went into effect on January 1, 2011. And each year, more of these legislative actions seem to be concerned with regulating computers, the Internet and online behavior. When the Internet first "went commercial" in the 1990s and became easy enough and affordable enough for the masses, it was a bit like the old western frontier: a wild and wooly "place" where the rule of the day was "anything goes."

This freedom was, of course, abused by some - and that led to government crackdowns. Most folks would agree that laws directed at pedophiles who hunt for young victims on the Internet, for example, are appropriate exercises of government authority. But each time a state or federal legislature meets, more laws are enacted with the aim of controlling what happens online. Some of these are needed, most are well intentioned, but some are badly thought out and easily misapplied. If you spend a lot of time online, it behooves you to check out what new laws may have gone into effect this year in your jurisdiction.

California was one of the most active states when it came to creating new laws. One of those that directly impacts Internet users is SB-1411, which makes it a misdemeanor to fraudulently identify yourself online.

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/prweb2011/01/prweb4952964.htm>

Such a law could have had nightmarish unintended consequences if not done properly. Think about the grandmotherly old lady who creates a Facebook page for her dog or cat, or the man or woman whose spouse calls and asks him/her to send an email from the spouse's account because said spouse doesn't have access to a computer. A badly written law could have inadvertently made those people criminals. Luckily, those who wrote the California law were very specific, and made the law applicable to those who impersonate someone else *without consent*. Does grandma have the dog's permission? It doesn't matter, because the statute goes further and specifies that to fall under the law, the impersonation must be "for purposes of harming, intimidating, threatening or defrauding another person." It also must be a "credible" impersonation. Whew! Grandma is probably safe, since no one really thought the Pomeranian was typing all those profound status updates.

Even prior to the new year, many states already had computer privacy statutes on the books. In one high profile case, a husband in Michigan was arrested for reading his wife's emails, which were on a computer that the two of them shared.

<http://postorperish.com/2010/12/29/arrested-fo-reading-wife%E2%80%99s-email-michigan-online-privacy/>

He hasn't gone to trial yet, but the outcome of this one could set some interesting precedent one way or the other. It also raises questions regarding how electronic communications differ (or don't) from older forms of communication. Would he have been arrested if he had gone through her dresser drawer and found and read handwritten letters? Would he have been arrested if he had picked up an extension phone and listened in on her conversation? Do we (or should we) have a greater



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This Months Quote:

In a few minutes a computer can make a mistake so great that it would have taken many men many months to equal it.

-author unknown

expectation of privacy in email than in those other forms of private correspondence?

At the federal level, one of the biggest Internet related issues has been "net neutrality," or the prohibition against ISPs favoring one type of content over another on their networks. In December, the Federal Communications Commission - sidestepping Congress - adopted a compromise order that requires providers to openly disclose how they manage their networks and requires them to transmit all lawful content (in other words, the provider can't block the VoIP packets of your third party service that competes with their own VoIP offering). The rules also mandates that the ISP must allow you to connect any non-harmful device to the network (such as your VoIP box, or a router that distributes the Internet connection to multiple computers). Finally, the rules ban ISPs from unreasonably slowing or degrading certain types of traffic on their networks. You can read more about the new rules here:

<http://itmanagement.earthweb.com/features/article.php/3918076/FCC-Approves-First-Net-Neutrality-Rules.htm>

Of course, the U.S. isn't the only country where new laws are tightening government controls over the Internet. Last month, Venezuela enacted legislation that bans content that promotes unrest or challenges existing authorities.

http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp3_l205402444_text

What do you think? Do we already have enough laws governing our online behavior? Or do we need more? Should a spouse go to jail for reading email on a shared computer? How do you feel about the net neutrality compromise? Is the U.S. headed toward the same sorts of restrictions on freedom of speech on the Internet that exist in other countries?

Gleaned from winxpnews 1/18/11



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How to turn your Windows 7 laptop into a wi-fi hotspot

Want to share your laptop's Internet connection with other wi-fi devices (for example, your iPad or Galaxy Tab, or friends' laptops)? Windows 7 supports a feature called Virtual Wi-fi (if your wireless adapter driver supports it - so you might need to update the driver to make it work. Some Intel, Broadcom and Realtek adapters support the feature). Here are the steps for setting it up:

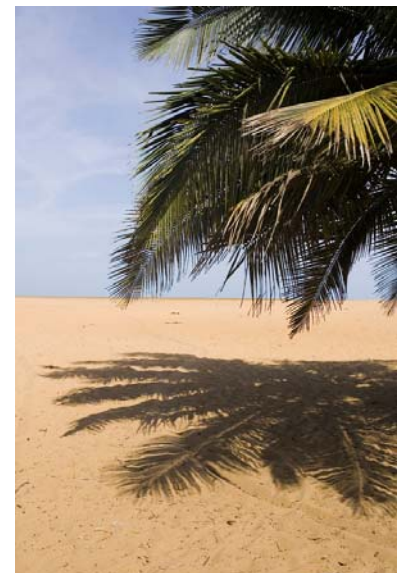
1. Click Start and in the search box, type **cmd**
 2. Right click the cmd.exe link and select "Run as Administrator."
 3. In the command prompt window, type: **netsh wlan set hostednetwork mode=allow ssid=MyNet key=MyPassword** replacing "MyNet" with the name you want to use for your wireless network and "MyPassword" with a password that will have to be entered on other devices to connect to it.
 4. Press Enter.
 5. Still at the prompt, type **netsh wlan start hostednetwork**
 6. Press Enter.
 7. Click Start | Control Panel.
 8. Click Network and Internet | Network Sharing Center.
 9. Select "Change Adapter Settings."
 10. Right click your Internet connection and click Properties.
 11. Click the Sharing tab.
 12. Check the box labeled "Allow other network users to connect ...".
- Select your virtual wi-fi adapter. Now other wi-fi devices should see your network name appear in their lists and they can connect to it by entering the password.

LIFE BEFORE THE COMPUTER

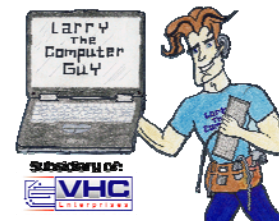
- Memory was something that you lost with age
- An application was for employment
- A program was a TV show
- A cursor used profanity



- A keyboard was a piano!
- A web was a spider's home
- A virus was the flu!
- A CD was a bank account
- A hard drive was a long trip on the road
- A mouse pad was where a mouse lived
- And if you had a 3 1/2 inch floppy
... you just hoped nobody found out!



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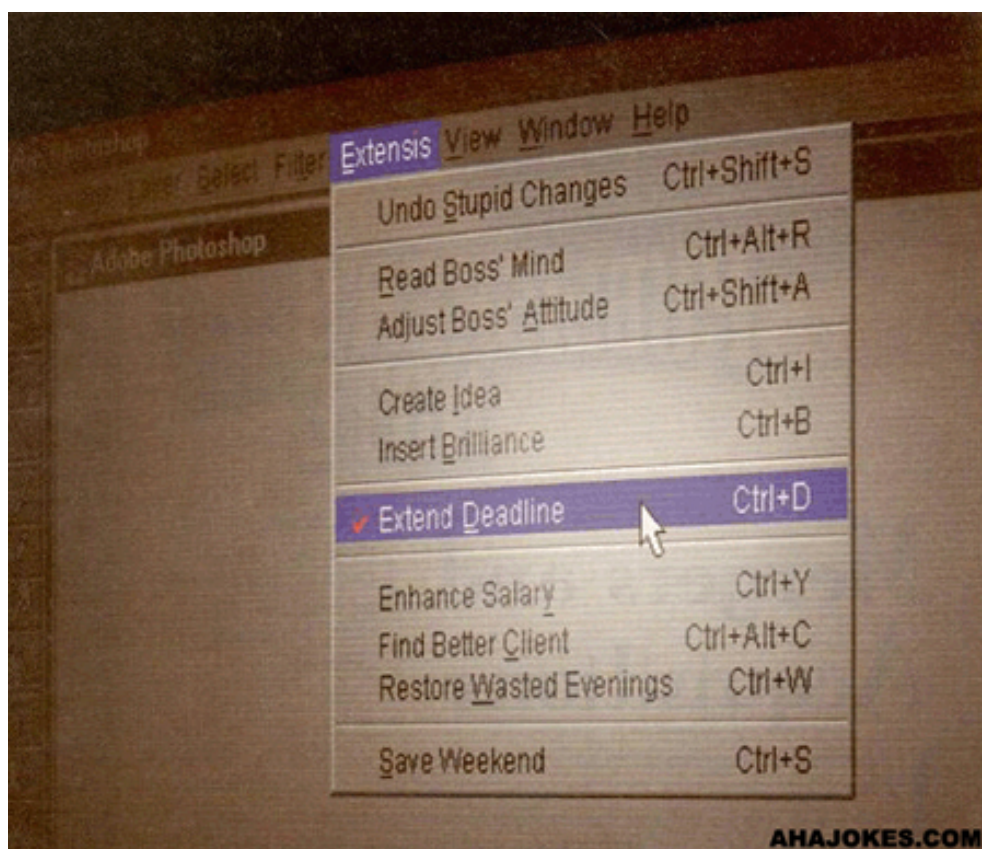


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Computer Quotes

Users /nm./: collective term for those who use computers. Users are divided into three types: novice, intermediate and expert.

Novice Users: people who are afraid that simply pressing a key might break their computer.

Intermediate Users: people who don't know how to fix their computer after they've just pressed a key that broke it.

Expert Users: people who break other people's computers.

— From the Jargon File.

If you don't want to be replaced by a computer, don't act like one." — Arno Penzias.

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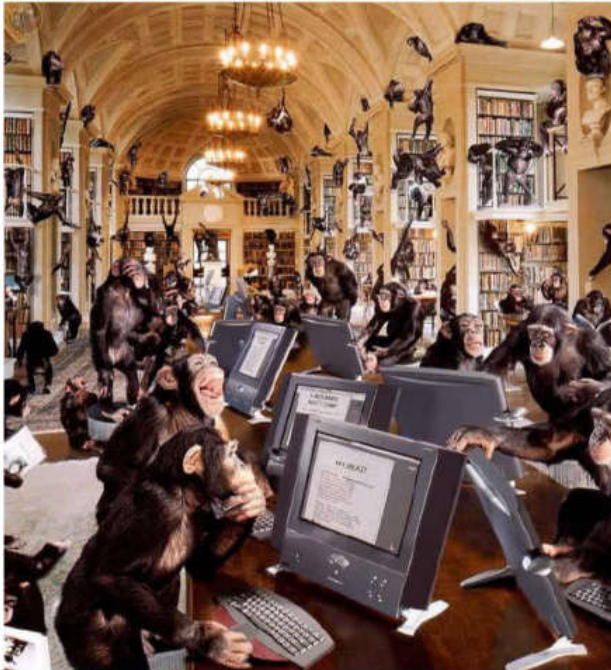
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