We’ve all been there; one minute you’re happily surfing the Web, then suddenly you’re sitting there waiting for what seems like hours for the next page to load. Or maybe you’re watching an episode of your favorite show on Netflix and the dreaded buffering icon makes the first of its many nightly appearances. If this sounds familiar, there’s a good chance that your WiFi network needs tweaking. In some cases, you may only need to make a few adjustments to resolve your wireless woes, while others may necessitate installing a new router or other hardware. Below are five signs that your WiFi setup needs help, along with a few tips to fix things.

1. Some Rooms Get a Stronger Signal Than Others
We may have noticed that you get a strong wireless reception in one room and only one bar on the WiFi signal meter in another. Signal strength is typically related to your distance from the router; the closer you are, the stronger the signal. There are other factors to consider though, such as physical obstructions like walls, doors, and structural beams between you and the router. In some cases, a simple antenna adjustment can go a long way toward increasing the signal, but you may have to relocate your router to a more central location to see a significant improvement. New mesh technology provides even more of an advantage to your WiFi service pushing your signal even further and allowing your devices to seamlessly stay connected throughout your home.
2017 Service Awards

Nine employees and two directors will be recognized for their years of service at the annual Christmas dinner in December. We would like to congratulate all of them and thank them for their years of loyal and dedicated service to the telecommunications industry.

**Employee Awards**

- **Stacey Loftsgard**
  - 20 years
- **Matthew Almen**
  - 15 years
- **Melanie Berghof**
  - 15 years
- **Justin Lindell**
  - 15 years
- **Ryan Rosinski**
  - 15 years
- **Kellen Arneson**
  - 10 years

**Director Awards**

- **Donnie Gordon**
  - 10 years
- **Jodi LaHaise**
  - 10 years
- **Evan Sommer**
  - 5 years
- **Jon McMillan**
  - 10 years
- **Brian Udby**
  - 5 years

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Polar Employees Donate $2,100 to Park River Aggie Boosters

Each year Polar employees have the opportunity to take part in the Casual Clothes for Charity program. Every Friday those participating are able to pay $1 to wear jeans that day. The total money collected this year was $2,100. All participating employees submitted a charity of their choice for the funds to be given to. One charity was randomly drawn, and this year’s recipient is the Park River Aggie Boosters.

Charities submitted for the drawing included Park River Aggie Boosters (2), Walsh County Domestic Violence and Abuse Program (2), Park River Fire Department (3), Mountain Bornum Park Fund, Walsh County Food Pantry, Fordville Fire Department, Adams Fire Department, Pregnancy Help Center (2), Fordville Ambulance Department, Park River Ambulance Department, Walsh County Backpack Program (2), Edinburg Fire Department, and Walsh County Relay for Life.

Polar employees are happy to have this opportunity to give back to the communities in which they live and work!

It Pays to be a Co-op Member

As a cooperative, Polar Communications pays out capital credits earned by patrons as the co-op makes a profit and generates earnings. If you had active service with Polar in 1999 or 2000 and earned capital credits there will be a credit on your December bill titled “Capital Credit”. If your capital credit reimbursement totals over $200 a check will be mailed to you.

PICK THE BOWL WINNERS AND YOU’LL WIN, TOO

Sign up at Polar.PickitChallenge.com

Win great prizes!
Games start December 16th
**Washington, D.C. Youth Tour**

The Foundation for Rural Service’s (FRS) annual Youth Tour is one of the most visible examples of the foundation’s involvement with, and commitment to, rural youth. This year’s Youth Tour will be held June 2-6, 2018. Each year, in collaboration with NTCA member companies, FRS brings rural students from across the United States to Washington, D.C., for a four-day tour of some of the most historical sites in the nation. While there, students also learn about the telecommunications industry, as well as the regulatory and legislative processes. Educational sessions on these topics are greatly enhanced by site visits to the U.S. Capitol and the FCC to meet with industry leaders and members of Congress. The students are also given ample time to explore the nation’s capital and its many attractions.

To qualify, the student’s parents must be voice or broadband subscribers of Polar, and the student must be age 16 or 17 years old at the time of the Youth Tour. Along with submitting an application, students are required to write an essay on modern technology. **Deadline for entries is March 1, 2018.** Applications can be obtained from your high school guidance counselor or online at www.thinkpolar.com.

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**Attention Students!**

*Apply for seven scholarships with one application for $$$ towards your college education!*

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**Polar’s John G. Walters Scholarship:** Five $1,000 scholarships will be issued to graduating high school seniors from our service area who plan to continue their education at an accredited 2-year or 4-year college/university or vocational-technical school. Parents or guardians must be Polar customers of voice or broadband Internet service.

**Polar’s Leadership Scholarship:** Polar Communications, in cooperation with its retired employees, offers the Polar Leadership Scholarship. This $2,000 scholarship will be awarded to students who are involved in their school, serve their communities, achieve leadership roles in activities, functions or organizations, and strive to reach their highest potential. Other considerations include any work/internship experience outside of school. Applicants must be a senior in high school or freshman or sophomore in college and their parents or guardians must be Polar customers of voice or broadband Internet service.

**Foundation for Rural Services (FRS) Scholarships:** FRS, along with NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association, promote, educate and advocate to the public rural telecommunications issues. Polar is proud to be a member of NTCA and supports FRS in this worthy endeavor. If a graduating high school senior from our service area is selected for one of the FRS national scholarships ($2,000 each), Polar will contribute an additional $500, bringing the FRS award to $2,500. Parents or guardians must be Polar customers of voice or broadband Internet service.

In addition, the FRS will award four $5,000 Staurulakis Family Scholarships with a preference to those applicants who plan to major in math, science, engineering or medicine; two $1,500 TMS Scholarships; one $7,000 Everett Kneecce Scholarship; and three $500 Roger Alan Cox Memorial Scholarships.

Polar has simplified the application process for high school seniors to apply for all seven scholarship programs using one application. College freshmen and sophomores are only eligible for the Leadership Scholarship. Please use your current college information when completing the application. Applications can be obtained from your high school guidance counselor or online at www.thinkpolar.com. **All scholarship applications must be sent to Polar by February 15, 2018.**
5 Signs Your WiFi Network Isn’t Up to Par

Continued from page 1

2. Pages Load Slowly When the Kids Are Playing Xbox Games
If web surfing slows to a crawl whenever your teenager is playing with his online buddies, it’s not just a coincidence. Gaming consoles like the PlayStation 4 and XBox One are usually configured to connect to the Internet via WiFi, and most online games require lots of bandwidth. If you’re using a single-band router, it may be time to upgrade to a dual-band router so that you can give the gaming console its own 5GHz channel, thereby freeing up bandwidth on the 2.4GHz channel (which most laptops, smartphones, and tablets use to connect to the router). Or, consider using a wired connection. Devices that are 5GHz capable can run faster over 5GHz channels so this is your best option.

3. My Wireless Signal Goes From Strong to Weak for No Apparent Reason
If you’re the only one in the house that is connected to your router and your wireless performance starts fluctuating wildly, you may have other users ‘borrowing’ your WiFi. It could be a neighbor connecting unwittingly or it could be a squatter who has figured out your network password and is snatching your bandwidth. If you suspect this is the case, start by checking your security settings to ensure that WPA or WPA2 encryption is enabled and that you assign a secure WiFi password.

You may also have to change your router’s password if you suspect it’s been compromised (many users stick with the factory default password, which is a mistake). Lastly, change your router’s SSID and turn off SSID broadcasting to hide your router from the public. If your router doesn’t offer these security options it’s probably an older model, in which case it’s time for a new one. Managed WiFi with GigaCenter from Polar is a good option.

4. I Can’t Stream Netflix When I’m Outside
There’s nothing like catching up on your favorite shows while relaxing on the deck, but if you’re having trouble staying connected, you are most likely either out of range of your WiFi router or have too many structural obstacles blocking your signal. An outdoor access point can help; these devices are designed to withstand the elements while bringing wireless connectivity to the great outdoors, but you’ll need to run Ethernet cabling to connect them to your home network. Another option is to install a second router indoors, closer to your backyard, and operate it as a wireless access point (AP). In the past, configuring an access point required some networking know-how, but most of today’s routers have a simple AP mode setting.

5. My Router Doesn’t Have Enough Wired Ports
One way to ease congestion on your WiFi network is to have certain client devices connect to your router via an Ethernet cable. Desktop PCs, media servers, and gaming consoles can all benefit by using a wired connection, but most routers only come with four wired ports, which will fill up quickly if you are using things like smart home hubs and Network Attached Storage (NAS) devices. Rather than swapping out cables whenever you want to play a game or watch a movie, add a multi-port Ethernet switch to your network. Depending on the model, you can add 5, 8, 16, or 24 wired ports to your network quickly and easily. An unmanaged switch is ideal for users who simply want to add more wired connectivity to their network, while a managed switch gives you control over how data is moved and allows you to monitor network traffic.

For WiFi that works consider Managed WiFi with GigaCenter from Polar. Managed WiFi with GigaCenter allows you to take control of your home network. You finally have power over all the devices in your home. Plus, you will gain unprecedented performance in wireless speed and coverage that reaches throughout the entire home. See page six of this newsletter to find out how you can receive FREE WiFi optimization in your home.
Microsoft officially eliminated support for Windows Vista on April 11, 2017. Microsoft has completely discontinued security updates, non-security hotfixes, free and paid assisted support options, and online technical content updates for the Vista operating system. While less than 1% of the world’s PC users still rely on Vista today, Microsoft has made it clear that they want users to move to a newer Windows OS. Over time, Vista will develop security flaws and cracks that cyber criminals are sure to exploit.

We know our customers rely on us to help keep them safe and secure, and we take that role very seriously. While SecureIT will continue to update virus definitions (that help identify the bad stuff on computers) for Vista, over time the OS itself will become vulnerable. Because of these concerns, SecureIT will only continue to support Vista through December 31, 2017. While SecureIT may continue to work on Vista for some time after that, it will no longer be tested or guaranteed.

It is very important that customers migrate to a modern operating system such as Windows 10. Customers moving to a newer operating system will benefit from dramatically enhanced security, broad device choice for a mobile workforce, higher user productivity, and a lower total cost of ownership through improved management capabilities.

To stay protected after support ends, you have some options. The first option is to upgrade your current PC’s operating system. Very few older computers will be able to run Windows 10, which is the latest version of Windows. We recommend that you download and run the Windows Upgrade Assistant (https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/3159635/windows-10-update-assistant) to check if your PC meets the system requirements for Windows 10 and then follow the steps in the tutorial to upgrade if your PC is able. For more detailed information, read the FAQ. You can also purchase a new PC. If your current PC can’t run Windows 10, it might be time to consider shopping for a new one.

Your current SecureIT product is transferable to your new PC and we will even help you re-install and set them up! Just give us a call at 1-877-373-3320 or CHAT 24/7.

We appreciate your business and look forward to delivering on our promise to provide world-class support.

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### Give your household the gift of WiFi that works!

WiFi is a part of daily life in most homes - it is a critical component of connectivity. With the number of wireless devices being used by you and your family members, including laptops, tablets, smart phones and TVs, you need a wireless connection that is reliable and secure. Give yourself the gift of a WiFi network that works with Managed WiFi with GigaCenter from Polar. When you sign up in December you’ll receive a free WiFi optimization, a $150 value!

Also this month, we’re offering you a special opportunity to increase your broadband speed at no additional charge. Go from 30Mb to 100Mb, switch from the 50Mb plan up to the 200Mb plan, or bump all the way up to 1Gb! The choice is yours! Visit thinkpolar.com to see all your options, then contact us and let us know what speed you’d like to move up to for FREE!

Increase your speed and continue paying your current rate for the next 3 months! PLUS, sign up for Managed WiFi with GigaCenter and receive FREE WiFi optimization!

Promotional offer ends December 31, 2017. Must keep upgraded service for 6 months. Some restrictions apply, call for details.
Backup Power Information

If your home telecommunications service is provided with our state-of-the-art fiber optic network, it requires electric power to operate. To avoid a disruption of home voice service during a power outage, and to maintain the ability to connect to 911 emergency services, we at Polar Communications provide you with an 8 hour backup battery with our demarcation equipment.

**What Your Backup Battery Can and Can’t Do For You**

The backup battery provided by Polar Communications is expected to last at least 8 hours on standby power. That means the backup battery should give you approximately 6 hours of talk time. The backup battery does not provide power to any services other than voice. Home security systems, medical monitoring devices, routers and other equipment will not run on a home phone backup battery. The backup battery does not power your phone handsets that may separately require power. You must have a phone capable of being plugged into a jack and running off the backup battery should your home power fail.

**Proper Care and Use of Your Battery**

The ability of the backup battery to power your phone service can be affected by many factors, including the age of your battery, improper home wire groundings and unprotected power surges, manufacturer defect, improper storage conditions, or failure to keep the power pack plugged in. Environmental factors such as temperature can shorten your battery’s useful life. We recommend that you store your battery above 41 and below 104. These batteries are rechargeable. This backup battery performs a self-test and produces an audible alarm on fault detection. If this happens, after checking that the unit is plugged into a functioning power plug, contact our business office and we will correct any fault condition.

If you have any questions on the provided backup battery, please call 1-701-284-7221 or visit our business office.
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Cynthia Hejl, Arthur
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Karl Blake

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Holiday Open House
December 11-15, 2017
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
110 4th St. E, Park River
Stop in and enjoy cookies, cider and coffee!