



One Call PC Solutions

IT Consulting, Maintenance and Repair



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Bits and Bytes...

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Office:
(817) 210-6177

128 N. Main St
Mansfield, TX 76063

support@1cps.com
www.1cps.com

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Bits and Bytes
and Technology
Today.

Broken Broadcast...

As the deadline for the switch to Digital TV approaches many of us are concerned about what is going to happen to our beloved televisions. Both the media and electronics retailers have put out a ton of information and much of it is conflicting and hard to understand. Depending on who you ask you either need an expensive new television or you don't need to do anything at all. To clear this confusion I can tell you that both statements are true, that is to say that in fact neither of them are correct. To be honest, there isn't one answer that fits everyone's situation but it does boil down to a couple of simple answers. If you subscribe to either cable or satellite television service then you have already done everything necessary to continue watching TV past the switch. The cable or satellite box that is already attached to your TV will continue to provide you with the same TV signal that you have always had. Easy enough, but the problem comes in for those televisions that receive their signal from "rabbit ears" or an attic or house mounted antenna. Those televisions, if more than a year or two old, will need a [converter box](#) to translate the new digital signals back to the old analog standard so that your television can understand them. The digital converters are available at Walmart and most other electronics retailers for around \$49. Installation is fairly simple, just hook it in between your antenna and the television.

Photoshoppin' for Free...

No, I'm not advocating software piracy. That'd be wrong, illegal even. And, it turns out, unnecessary. Fact is, most people don't use 10% of the features of the near \$1000 professional editing suite so it makes sense that we could get away with a program that offers 80% of the functionality for free. Both The GIMP and newcomer ArtWeaver offer almost all of the Photoshop goodness at a \$0 price tag. [The GIMP](#) ([The GNU Image Manipulation Program](#)) has been around for a long time and has a huge user base. The large amount of users results in many tutorials available online to explain step-by-step how to accomplish different projects with ease. [ArtWeaver](#) was recently released so its fan base is somewhat limited but it has the advantage of looking and working nearly identically to Photoshop. This allows you to follow most Photoshop tutorials with ArtWeaver and not get too lost in the process.

Twitter? What did you just call me?

When even CNN's Nancy Grace references [Twitter](#), I knew it was time to find out what it is. After doing a little reading I was a bit disappointed. I have to admit that I don't do "social networking". I abandoned my MySpace page years ago, you won't find me on FaceBook or LinkedIn. [Bits and Bytes](#) and [Technology Today](#) are the closest I get to writing a blog. Even [my own homepage](#) is merely a container for family photos. So to say that I don't understand Twitter is an understatement. In the most basic sense it is a small billboard of 149 characters on the web that you use to tell your friends and family what you are doing at this exact moment. Things such as "David is now studying for an economics exam" or "Sandra is now mowing the yard" are examples of messages that I found on other people's Twitter posts. The idea is that you "subscribe" to your friends Twitter blogs and your main page then shows what all of your friends are up to at this exact second. In this age of information overload, is this really necessary? Anyone remember that time before pagers and cell phones when you could just simply be not available?

Be gone, sensitive data!

You may have heard that simply deleting a file doesn't actually make it go away. There are many freely available programs that make recovering accidentally deleted files very simple. But what if you want to make sure that last years tax return is completely gone before you donate that old computer to your nephew? [Eraser](#) will completely destroy files and make recovery impossible. It does this by filling the file full of random characters and saving it on top of itself several times before finally filling the empty space with nothing but zeros.

Final Byte...

"A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history - with the possible exceptions of flamethrowers and tequila" ~Unknown