

CUSTOMER CONNECTION



How will Internet-Connected Personal Assistants Change PRIVACY IN OUR HOMES?

MAYBE YOU ALREADY HAVE ONE. MAYBE YOU'VE SEEN THE COMMERCIAL OR THE COMICAL VIDEO OF THE BOY WHOSE REQUESTS WERE MISUNDERSTOOD BY THE DEVICE. ONE THING'S FOR SURE, THESE LATEST VOICE-CONTROLLED SMART APPLIANCES ARE QUITE IMPRESSIVE. THEY CAN PLAY MUSIC, CONTROL LIGHTS, AND ANSWER QUESTIONS WITH NOTHING BUT YOUR VOICE. IN FACT, THEY CAN EVEN BE TOLD TO ORDER GROCERIES OR A PIZZA. (QUITE POSSIBLY, A BUSY MOM'S DREAM.)

But, are these little helpers too good to be true? That depends on your views about privacy. Here's what we know about devices such as Amazon Echo and Google Home *(as published at www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/science/sd-me-echo-home-20170105-story.html):*

- > They both work in a similar manner. They constantly listen for a trigger phrase. Once activated, they record a voice query and upload it to the cloud for an appropriate response to return.
- > Each boasts a roster of unique features to entice shoppers. The \$130 Google Home can sync with any device that supports Google Cast, like Android smartphones and Chromecasts. The \$180 Echo relies on Bluetooth, which makes it more compatible with smart home devices and wearables.
- > Differences aside, both share one major downside: privacy. Both Alexa and the Google Voice Assistant are constantly listening to everyone within microphone range for input by default. That core function broaches a series of privacy concerns:
 - > The microphones are **always** listening unless physically muted.
 - > The voice assistants cannot differentiate between different people.
 - > The devices upload recordings and store them on cloud servers.
 - > Data collected from recordings and subsequent analyses is used to provide a customized experience and, in all likelihood, targeted advertising.
 - > The device's location is used to give more accurate searches and, again, targeted advertisements.

(continued on page 3)

SERVING THIS AREA SINCE 1900

465 Delaware Avenue • Palmerton, PA 18071 • www.ptelco.com

Customer Service: 610-826-6650
Business Office: 610-826-2115
Repair Service: 610-826-3444
Gilbert Office: 610-826-9321

From the Manager's Desk...

Dear Valued Customers,

Our billing conversion is in progress. Thank you for your patience during the last few months. We've already sent several updates, via letter, bill insert and in this newsletter, but here are the most important items to know right now:

- > If you currently use or would like to use E-bill to receive your bill via email, you will need to enroll with your new account number after receiving your April bill.
- > You will have a new account number. Your new bill will be very similar to the one you currently receive, but your account number will change. The new number will appear on your April bill.
- > The transition to our new billing system began on **February 23, 2018** and will end on **March 6, 2018**. During this time, we are unable to accept credit card payments. We will accept checks in the office or by mail and cash in our office, but payments will not post to your account until **March 7, 2018**.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you for choosing Palmerton Telephone Company. As always, if you have questions about your landline telephone service, you are welcome to call or stop in for assistance.

Sincerely,

Tim Hausman

General Manager,
Palmerton Telephone

465 Delaware Avenue
Palmerton, PA 18071
www.ptelco.com

Do you know that Palmerton Telephone has been serving the area since 1900?

NOTICE:

Palmerton Telephone Company charges a fee of \$20.00 for returned checks.

MARCH 2018 RECIPE

Broccoli and Cheddar Soup

Ingredients:

- > 3 tablespoons butter
- > 1/4 small onion, chopped
- > 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- > 1 cup half-and-half
- > 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- > salt and ground black pepper to taste
- > 2 cups chopped broccoli
- > 1 carrot, chopped
- > 1 celery stalk, chopped
- > 1 1/4 cups shredded mild Cheddar cheese

Directions:

Melt butter in a stock pot over medium-high heat; add onion and saute until tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Whisk in flour and continue to stir until mixture turns golden brown, about 5 minutes. Slowly add half-and-half to onion mixture, stirring until mixture is smooth. Add chicken broth; season with salt and ground black pepper.

Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer mixture until thickened, about 10 minutes. Add broccoli, carrot, and celery. Simmer until vegetables are tender yet crisp, about 20 minutes.

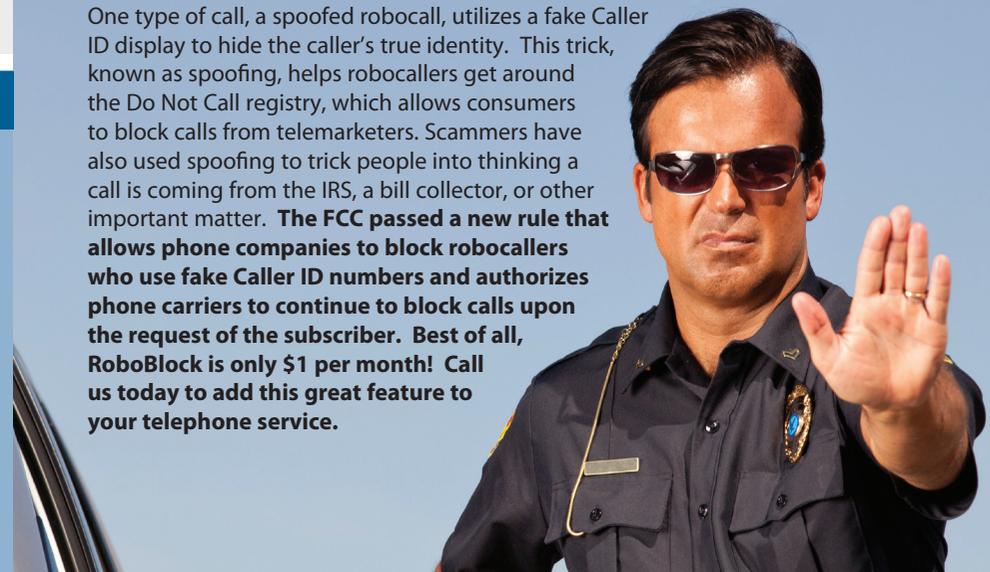
Reduce heat to low. Add Cheddar cheese to soup and cook, stirring occasionally, until cheese melts, about 5 minutes.

Featured Feature RoboBLOCK

Stop Robocalls with RoboBlock!

THERE'S SOMETHING MOST OF US WILL AGREE UPON: ROBOCALLS ARE A NUISANCE. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE THEM? DESPITE FCC AND OTHER EXISTING PROTECTIONS TO HELP CONSUMERS AVOID UNWANTED NUISANCE CALLS, THERE IS STILL AN UNACCEPTABLY HIGH VOLUME THAT OCCUR.

One type of call, a spoofed robocall, utilizes a fake Caller ID display to hide the caller's true identity. This trick, known as spoofing, helps robocallers get around the Do Not Call registry, which allows consumers to block calls from telemarketers. Scammers have also used spoofing to trick people into thinking a call is coming from the IRS, a bill collector, or other important matter. **The FCC passed a new rule that allows phone companies to block robocallers who use fake Caller ID numbers and authorizes phone carriers to continue to block calls upon the request of the subscriber. Best of all, RoboBlock is only \$1 per month! Call us today to add this great feature to your telephone service.**



How will Internet-Connected Personal Assistants Change Privacy in Our Homes?

- > Data may be shared with third parties and this may be unknown to the user.
- > All of the data passed between an Echo or Home and its corresponding servers is encrypted, so security is not so much an issue. A hacker won't be able to decipher any intercepted communication.

THE LARGER CONCERN IS PRIVACY, RATHER THAN SECURITY.

Voice assistants are subject to unforeseen vulnerabilities. Using them means trust in Amazon, Google and any third-party developers that create the integrated apps and companies that could potentially gather your data. It also means that you must trust your family members and visitors who could also access your device. Ultimately, voice assistants are not private. They rely on the cloud to access applications and analyze recordings, a job that is too complex to do on the device itself. That's why you purchase the hardware (Amazon Echo, Google Home, or any other personal assistant) and sacrifice the privacy of your usage to pay for the service. In turn, developers can use your information for marketing and data to serve advertisements and promote products. Unless a subscription model is introduced at a later time, it's an all or nothing deal. If you aren't willing to sacrifice your privacy, a personal assistant may not be the best choice. If you don't mind, it can be a very convenient device.

Do you know that Palmerton Telephone copper wires, connected end to end, circle the earth 4 times at the equator?

Brain Teaser January 2018 Winner

Congratulations to **Josephine Mihalek of Palmerton, Pa.** Josephine was the winner of a \$25 Gift Card to Claude's Creamery in Palmerton, Pa.

A man pushes his car to a hotel and tells its owner that he is bankrupt. Why?

Answer: He is playing Monopoly

March 2018 Product Feature

Call Forwarding

ARE YOU GOING ON VACATION THIS SUMMER?

DOES YOUR JOB TAKE YOU FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER?

Selective Call Forwarding can help you stay in touch with the ones you love by automatically forwarding specific callers to any phone number you choose. Only those calls are rerouted to your "forward to" number. All others will ring at your home phone as usual.

For just \$3.50 per month, Selective Call Forwarding allows you to forward incoming calls from up to ten (10) telephone numbers within the 610 calling area to another telephone number. Calls made using this service are subject to the regular local or toll charges.

First, if you don't already have this feature, call us to subscribe. Then, when the number of the caller you wish to forward is within the Palmerton Telephone network (most 610-824, 826, 852, 381 and 681 exchanges) you can activate Selective Call Forwarding from your home telephone, using the instructions below. If the caller you want to forward is outside the Palmerton Telephone network, simply call our Business Office and we'll set up the forwarding for you.

To Activate Selective Call Forwarding, lift the handset and listen for a dial tone. If you have a cordless phone, you may have to press the hang-up/answer button, probably the same key you use to initiate or end a call. Press *63 (On a rotary phone dial 1163). Listen for an announcement telling you whether the feature is currently stored in your forward list. Follow the voice instructions and dial 3 to turn the feature ON (if it is currently off) or turn the feature OFF (if it is currently on). The first time you turn on the service, you'll be asked to enter the number you'd like to use for your forwarded calls. From then on, the system will remind you of the current "forward to" number.

Please note, toll charges apply when you forward calls to a number outside your local calling area.

Brain Teaser

Palmerton Telephone is giving away your choice of \$25 Gift Card to Claude's Creamery or Computer Patrol "The Store", both in Palmerton, PA.

To enter, e-mail the correct answer to ptelco@ptd.net or send a 3" x 5" index card to 465 Delaware Ave. Palmerton, PA 18071. Please include your name, address, daytime telephone number (to call only if you win), and the Brain Teaser answer. All entries must be received by **3/20/18**.

Good Luck! Palmerton Telephone

Two girls were born to the same mother, on the same day, at the same time, in the same month, and year and yet they are not twins. How can this be?

FUN FACTS

Color tells us about the temperature of a candle flame. The inner core of the candle flame is light blue, with a temperature of around 1670 K (1400 °C). That is the hottest part of the flame. The color inside the flame becomes yellow, orange, and finally red.

A deck of English Uno cards from 1994. This particular deck uses the older card design, where letters appear on the action cards instead of symbols. The deck consists of 108 cards, of which there are twenty-five of each color (red, green, blue, and yellow), each color having two of each rank except zero.

While bees and wasps inject venom when they sting, mosquitoes simply bite to feed on your blood. The bumps and itchiness that follow come from an anticoagulant that the mosquito injects to prevent your blood from clotting, which triggers a mild allergic reaction that includes the typical round, red bumps.

Bones stop growing after puberty and muscle and fat cells also stop dividing. But cartilage - that's the plastic-like stuff in ears and noses - continues to grow until the day you die. Not only does cartilage grow, but the earlobes elongate from gravity.

Giraffes are the tallest animals in the world. Males can grow up to 18 feet (5.5 meters) tall, females can reach 14 feet (4.3 meters) tall and their babies, called calves, are born six feet (1.8 meters) tall. Calves can grow up to an inch a day.

Flamingos often stand on one leg, the other leg tucked beneath the body. The reason for this behavior is not fully understood. Recent research indicates that standing on one leg may allow the birds to conserve more body heat, given that they spend a significant amount of time wading in cold water.