PLUMAS COUNTY TECH TIPS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TECHNOLOGY TODAY

CONTACT US:

HANIF - (530) 283-**6263**

MELODIE - (530) 283-**6147**

JEREMIAH - (530) 283-**6335**

GREG - (530) 283-**6336**

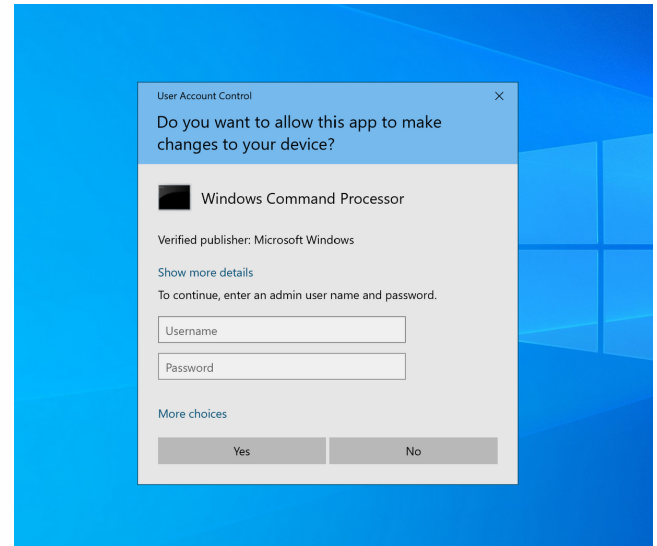## Checking Email and Voicemail Remotely

With the unpredictable weather, we wanted to reminder everyone of how to check your email and voicemail remotely.

For email, you'll want to use https://outlook.office365.com/. Your username is your full county email and the password you created for your Microsoft account. You WILL be prompted for multi-factor authentication so if it rings your work phone, make sure to forward your work phone to your cell phone. You can also always find the link to the Outlook Web App through plumascounty.us, clicking on the "Government" tab, then the "E-Services" page, and then "Access County Email with Microsoft 365".

For voicemail, call your number and when the voicemail greeting starts, press the * key. It will then ask you to enter your "ID" which will be the last 4 digits of your phone number. You will then be prompted for your voicemail password.

Administrative Accounts - What are they?

Administrative accounts are an essential part of a functioning business IT network. Not only can they protect our employees and customers, but they allow us to optimize our performance in both IT and business productivity. There are typically two types of user accounts on Windows: standard accounts and administrator accounts. On Windows, your user account type determines what actions you're allowed to perform on your computer. A standard user account is designed for day-to-day computing. You can't do complicated system tweaks with it, but you can still perform everyday tasks without any issues. You can check your email, browse the internet, make and edit presentations, edit videos and do much more. All county employees have standard user accounts.

However, with a standard account, you have to deal with User Account Control (UAC) *(see image above)* when performing tasks like installing applications, editing registry, or anything that requires elevated rights. When the UAC prompt appears, standard user accounts will be prompted to enter administrative credentials to proceed – that's when you call us.

An administrator is someone who can make changes on a computer that will affect other users of the computer. Administrators can change security settings, install software and hardware, access all files on the computer (**ONLY** if directed by a Department Head), and make changes to other user accounts.

Visibility is vital when it comes to dealing with our IT network. Without it, anything could happen on the network. Having an administrative or privileged account grants us a source of truth and the ability to see and control anything and everything in our database. This visibility makes it possible to enact preventative measures as well as provide quick solutions to breaches.

An administrative account offers full system control; therefore, it has the right to make changes to a computer. These changes may be for good, like security updates, or for bad, like making unauthorized changes. As such, giving everyone administrator rights on a computer isn't such a great idea.

Administrative users pose serious risks in several ways. This can include both user errors and insider attacks perpetrated by hackers that gain access to user credentials. As many as 95% of cybersecurity breaches are caused one way or another by human error. By limiting our administrator accounts down to only the four people in IT, we eliminate the chances of human error as much as we can.

While we understand it can sometimes be a pain to have to call IT to install an app or software, we are ultimately trying to protect you and the county from bad actors. ***At no time will IT access any documents on your computer without explicit approval from you or approval from your Department Head.*** We also don't monitor your computer activity unless specifically asked. "Administrative" accounts are a protection for all of us and aren't used lightly. We are prompted by multi-factor authentication EVERY time we use our administrative credentials, and we are always working on ways to make our administrative accounts more secure. Administrative accounts are a security best practice and are used in every type of government, and business.

Should I Upgrade to Windows 11? What You Need to Know

Windows 11 launched in October 2021, and Microsoft has been steadily patching and improving it ever since. That begs the question: Is it time to hop on board the hype train and upgrade to Windows 11? It's a question we get often, usually when someone catches a glimpse of the centered Start menu on one of our computer screens. The answer depends on what kind of PC you have and what you use it for, but in general, the answer is: Sure, if you're interested.

Windows 11 is Microsoft's vision for the future of PC operating systems, and in general, it's a simpler, more streamlined, and more secure spin on Windows 10. If you don't meet the minimum hardware requirements or have an older computer, you'll, unfortunately, have to wait a while longer.

If your PC does qualify, upgrading to Windows 11 from Windows 10 should be free, so the only potential roadblock is your fear of change.

And while some of that fear may be well-founded, in general, you'll find Windows 11 is a very inoffensive operating system. Despite its remarkably stringent system requirements the new and improved Windows is, on the surface, very similar to Windows 10, and after testing it myself since launch I can tell you that it's completely usable. The biggest change you'll notice when upgrading is the new design: Windows 11 still has the traditional desktop and taskbar, but now there are some new buttons on the taskbar alongside the Start button and they're all centered in the middle, rather than clustered in the left corner.

Once you get used to this, and the rounder, more streamlined look of Windows 11 menus in general, you've seen the biggest change Microsoft has in store for you. Eventually, Windows 10 will be phased out and everyone will be forced to upgrade, but that will be a few years down the road. Be aware - if you decide to upgrade to Windows 11 and decide you hate it, rolling back to Windows 10 is very difficult so you may be stuck with Windows 11. If you decide you're ready to upgrade, give IT a call and we will upgrade your machine if it is possible. Below you can find a preview of what Windows 11 looks like.