

INTRODUCTION

Greetings. My name is Sean Mellor and I am the owner/manager of Intrex Online Services here in Moose Jaw. Intrex has been in business for nine years and through that time has been able to provide excellent service and pricing to the computer-buying customers of Moose Jaw. A large part of our success has been due to our partnership with SaskTel as High Speed Internet and Max Interactive TV dealers. Over the years, we have managed to achieve an enviable position of excellence within the community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our valued customers for their continued support.

Over the next few months, I will be sharing some of the knowledge that we have acquired through our experiences repairing computers. On average, we repair 8-15 computers per day, and this experience has given us a good, statistical idea of what causes the majority of problems for users. In this series of articles, I will discuss many of the issues facing today's computer user and my intention is to give the average user the tools and the information necessary to keep their computer running well, because the bulk of the troubles that people face are self-inflicted.

Windows is a very powerful operating system. It gives us a connection to the world that both educates and empowers us, making us more capable of seeing and acting beyond our own normal circle of influence. However, that power comes at a price. First, the connection is a two-way street, meaning that for all the information and power you are given, an equivalent amount of information and power can be taken from you. Second, because Windows is so complex, it can suffer from chaotic behaviour. This is similar to the weather, or human psychology. In our business, we frequently use medical, psychological or even mechanical metaphors to give our clients an idea of what is happening in their system. To ask us WHY such and such happened on your system is akin to asking your doctor WHY you got cancer. It's a question of risk factors, and we provide you with all the information you need to enjoy a healthy computing "lifestyle", to keep your Windows running in tip-top condition.

The first thing any internet user needs to understand is that there is no such thing as FREE. If you are playing games online, or getting lyrics for your favorite song, or just instant messaging, somebody is footing the bill. Your task is to figure out who and why, because the vast majority of sites and services are paid for by advertising. A website like www.barbie.com is fairly obvious; these people sell dolls, and you can be reasonably sure that it is the sale of dolls that pays for the website. In essence, the website is the ad for the dolls, and your child can play on this site all day without you having to worry about what may or may not be coming on to your computer. Most websites are much less obvious about this, and there can also be a distinction between ethical and unethical advertisers. Once you know and understand where the money is coming from and going to, it is much easier for you to avoid getting your Windows (or yourself) into trouble. I will be talking more (harping on it, actually) about this issue in the months to come.

If you have question or comments, I can always be reached via email sean@intrex.ca or join our forums at <http://intrex.ca> for more in-depth conversations.