
GIVING THANKS, FOR MODEMS AND DEEP-FRIED TURKEY

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PERSONAL TECH

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Here are a few things I'm thankful for:

Thanksgiving disaster Web sites.

A few years back, when I was on sabbatical in California, I rose early on Thanksgiving and popped the turkey in the oven. About an hour later, I opened the door to see how things were going. Uh oh. The bird was stone cold. Apparently, the oven in my home away from home was dead. In a few short hours, invited guests would be streaming through the door.

That was in 1993, ancient times in Web years. Back then, all I could do was frantically call around until I found a friend with an oven that could be pressed into service. These days, I'd also have the option of heading for my computer to look up alternate cooking methods.

Did you know you can deep-fry a 15-pound turkey in about 45 minutes? Check it out at <http://allrecipes.com/cb/kh/thanks/friedturkey>.

OK, if that's a little extreme, there's always the grill. Get the details at www.thanksgivingrecipe

[.com/az/TheGreatestTurkeyEverGrill.asp](http://www.thanksgivingrecipe.com/az/TheGreatestTurkeyEverGrill.asp).

So, what's your problem this morning? Forget to turn on the oven? Lumpy gravy? Small turkey, bigger than expected guest list? Log on to foodtv.com, click "Let's Talk Turkey," then scroll down and hit "Kitchen Disaster 911" for some fixes.

A guest says she's a vegetarian? Go to www.vegweb.com/food/events/index-thanksgiving.shtml and look for a recipe that uses whatever ingredients you have on hand.

And over the next couple of days don't sweat those leftovers,. There's a long list of stuff to do with aging turkey at www.cdktichen.com/recipes/Holidays/Thanksgiving_Leftovers.

Dial-up modems and AOL.

Never thought these words would pass my lips, but for once I'm thankful that I have an America Online account and a dial-up modem. My Verizon DSL service has been down since Nov. 9.

For days, I tweaked my system - only to discover that the problem is on Verizon's end. I now know its support number by heart. Since I work from home, to say this is an inconvenience is an understatement.

But thanks to my dial-up modem and AOL's network, I've been able to log on to an incredibly useful Web site, dslreports.com.

Among the offerings is a forum where DSL subscribers share war stories. I've learned more about Verizon's woes at dslreports than from any of the company's five techs I've spoken with. For instance, I learned that lots of other folks' lines went down on Nov. 9, including some of my neighbors in Jamaica Plain. And that other Massachusetts subscribers say their connections have dropped to speeds slower than dial-up.

When will we see some relief? It's anybody's guess. All we know is that they're "working on it."

I would use dslreport's DSL Finder feature to find another provider, but in my neighborhood if you want high-speed Internet access you can have Verizon or Verizon. For now, I'm grateful for a regular modem and one of AOL's many local access numbers.

Online travel reservations.

My family and a few close friends are scattered around the country, so I usually hit the road during the holiday season. Right about now I'm truly grateful for the wealth of travel services online. Over the years, the offerings have gotten better

and better. You can now track flights in real time, check schedules, get airport and parking information and, of course, make reservations for flights, hotels, and cars.

One of my favorite tools is qixo.com, a kind of search engine for air fares. Type in your itinerary, and Qixo will search 10 travel sites, including Expedia, Cheaptickets, and Travelocity, and bring back a list of fares. No more flitting from site to site to see who's got the lowest price.

A new service at Northwest Airlines' site, nwa.com, lets you check in and print out a boarding pass right from your own computer. You'll need to have an e-ticket and access to a printer.

And although it runs a little slowly over my dial-up modem, massport.com is my top choice for keeping up on happenings at Logan.

Garden.com.

Finally, I'm grateful to have been acquainted with this Web site. Like a bunch of other dot-coms, the site went belly up this month.

That's a shame, because in addition to being one of the most beautifully designed sites on the Web, garden.com appeared to do a lot of things right. From its gorgeous presentation and great selection of plants and gifts to its wonderful print magazine, live chats, online garden designer, and useful e-mail newsletters, the site was a virtual oasis.

This year, garden.com's "Grassroots Tour" stopped in Boston, treating loyal fans to free food, T-shirts, and gardening demonstrations.

I often dropped in on garden

.com just to browse. I can count on one hand the number of times I pushed the order button, though. It just seemed easier to head to a local nursery and bring stuff home. That kind of thinking will certainly kill off a lot more dot-coms before it's all over. It will be interesting to see who's left standing and what's to come.

In the meantime, garden.com is heading off into the sunset with a going-out-of-business sale until Dec. 1. Think I'll stop and click on the flowers.