

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month's question is: Recently I was talking with someone and they said they'd like to see some member education about "using newsgroups" and how resourceful they are. I don't think I know what he was talking about?!? Is it a good thing?

Newsgroups are a means for people to share information or get questions answered about a topic. They have been in existence since the beginning of the internet. When they first started they were just a listing of topics to which people posted messages to. To find information in these newsgroups, you would have to browse the newsgroups. The newsgroups changed over time and today you can run searches on them, and some of them will email individual posts or daily digests of the day's posts. Some newsgroups have an area to store files or pictures for the members of the newsgroup to share. Another name for a newsgroup is a message board, these are normally setup on an organizations website to have the exchange of information about they're services or products.

These newsgroups/message boards range from free-use ones like Yahoo Groups and MSN Communities to fee-based ones like ezboards and UBB boards. To see the variety, just search for newsgroups at your favorite search engine. I use a number of newsgroups for both my business needs and my hobby needs. I'm sure if you look at some of your suppliers and customers website, you'll see they use newsgroups as a way of providing customer support.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer to, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.