

COMPUTER GURU

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Technology Lab Programs sponsored by: Novi Wealth Partners

Remote Tech Help

When the Covid-19 pandemic closed our building, the staff quickly moved our lifelong learning activities to the internet.



Random person installing Zoom without tech support.

Suddenly, our physical meetings and activities were replaced with virtual get-togethers using Zoom.

We also had to suspend our walk-in Tech Lab services, which was a double-whammy because it left folks who needed help participating in our online services without tech support. While many folks are able to add Zoom to their computers, tablets, and smartphones without much trouble, others find the process less than intuitive—especially on Macbook computers that force the user to negotiate Apple’s myriad security checks.

And there was no help for all the other “issues,” like stuck email, forgotten passwords, and checks for malware.

...the staff created a new mailbox, tech@princeton senior.org, where folks could send their requests for tech help.

Moving Tech Help Online

We had to move our tech support to an online service, too, so we could continue to help our participants remotely—not only for Zoom, but for general problems that we would have fixed in the tech lab.

First, the staff created a mailbox, tech@princeton senior.org, where folks could send their requests for tech help. Then, we set up an internal tracking system¹ to assign help requests to our volunteers, coordinate our responses, and ensure that we had followed through.

TeamViewer

This has worked well, and we can often resolve tech issues with a quick phone call or email. But sometimes the only way to help our clients is by remotely accessing their computer, in essence mimicking a visit to the tech lab. And to do that, we use a program called TeamViewer.

TeamViewer is free, and [we provide instructions](#) for installing the software on both Mac and Windows computers. Once TeamViewer is running, it displays a ten-digit ID (which doesn’t change) and a six-character password that changes with every TeamViewer help session. There’s nothing to write down or memorize.

Next, we call the participant, who tells us the ID and password. We also run TeamViewer on our computer and enter the participant’s ID and password. We can then see the client’s computer screen and control the computer remotely. At that point, it’s as if the client were in the Tech Lab with us. This also means we can help folks with their laptop *and* desktop computers.



...and with tech support.

This convenience and flexibility also require considerable care because the user is giving someone (us) who isn’t there access and control of their computer. Of course, we can only do this when the user gives us the password, which is different every time they use TeamViewer. And many of you know us from your visits to the Tech Lab. However, scam artists also know about TeamViewer, so you must never give anyone access to your computer unless you know the person who is helping you. Remember: Microsoft and Apple do not call their customers to warn them of malware, the IRS doesn’t call to ask you to pay tax

¹ We use a work management application called Asana.

penalties with Target gift cards, and the Social Security Administration will not call you about finding your identification in a Toyota Corolla in Texas with twenty-two pounds of drugs in the front seat. (“Have you ever been to Texas?”)

If you need help with your tech stuff, drop us an email at tech@princetonsenior.org. You need to explain the problem, the kind of equipment you have, and your phone number. Or go to our Tech Services web page for additional information and a tech help request form.