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Digitally Cool

Accolades for Vonage VOIP

My phone service is through Vonage Broadband using a technology known as VOIP [Voice Over Internet Protocol].

I just recently *moved* and for the 1st time with a phone company, have NO service cancellation calls to make or reconnection appointments or fees to pay-- one of the highly desirable features of VOIP. The one thing I did do, though, is simply log into my account online, click on 'Features' and Edit my location for 911 emergency services. Then I clicked on Activate 911 Service. This is necessary due to the 'portability' of broadband.

For 911 service, Vonage uses the address I provide to determine the nearest emergency response center and then sends my call to a general number at that center. When the center receives my call, the call taker will not have my address and may not have my phone number on hand -- in that case, I will provide that information in order to get help.

Some local emergency response centers may decide not to have their general numbers manned by live operators 24 hours a day. If Vonage learns that this is the case, Vonage will send my call instead to a national emergency calling center and a trained agent will contact an emergency center near me to dispatch help.

I will receive a confirmation email once 911 Dialing has been activated for my newly registered location. Once 911 is activated, if I dial 911, my call will go to a general access line at my local Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). **Unlimited local and long distance calling: \$24.99/mo.**

Virtual Phone Numbers are secondary numbers that ring to my primary Vonage line for \$4.99 mo. The advantage is that people outside my local calling area can call me for the price of a local call if I choose a virtual phone number in their area code.

Microsoft Phishing

Filter Add-in for MSN



Search Toolbar (Beta)



Available as a **FREE** download beginning today, August 31, is a nifty new tool from Microsoft.

Requirements: MSN Search Toolbar with Windows Desktop Search and Microsoft Windows XP SP2, Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 or later.

What it **DOES**: Increase your protection against identity theft and financial scams. The Microsoft Phishing Filter Add-in Beta warns you of Web sites containing suspicious content and protects you from accidentally sharing personal information on reported phishing sites. If the add-in suspects that the Web site a user is visiting is a phishing site, it flashes a bright yellow bar under the tool bar with a warning saying the site is suspicious and to proceed with caution.

The antiphishing tool is in beta-test form and is based on the same technology that will be featured in the upcoming Internet Explorer 7 browser.

"We want to help customers be more aware of where they are landing online and steer clear of this phishing phenomenon out there, which unfortunately continues to grow," a Microsoft spokesperson said.



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- **Internet TAX Update**

.Beware of VIRTUAL
OUTSOURCING

Internet Tax Update

13 U.S.A. states, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and West Virginia are pushing for Internet Taxes this year by means of the Streamlined Sales Tax Project.

To be accepted as part of the project, a state must change its tax laws to match up with the others. Five additional states that expect to comply with this requirement in the next few years are Arkansas, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming.

Basically, these politicians hope to persuade federal lawmakers to pass a new law to overcome the Supreme Court ruling of 1992, which forbids states from forcing a business to collect their sales taxes unless the company has a physical presence in the affected state.

Supporters of the Streamlined Sales Tax Project demand that Internet companies charge sales taxes. Software from private vendors that automatically calculates the different taxes for different states and for different items will reportedly be used.

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Beware of VIRTUAL OUTSOURCING

Based in New Delhi, India and with headquarters now in Dubai in the Middle East is a firm that caters to U.S. college students for on-demand online learning, --CareerLauncher.com.



My experience as a parent plus my professional career(s) in technology have proven to me that most of us are underutilized. A proponent of the 'No Child Left Behind' movement, I am against 'virtual tutor outsourcing' to achieve that goal because I believe that we have the human resources in the United States of America to educate and tutor our children.

Outsourcing overseas in a technical environment typically means getting talent from **India**. Virtual outsourcing means using the Internet and logging in online to an agency that supplies virtual tutors from India, the Phillipines, Chile and Canada. Using a VOIP phone, chat and virtual chalkboard [known as a whiteboard], the tutor answers the student's questions. The tutor is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

My concern is that by turning to Virtual Outsourcing we are relieving teachers [and parents] of the opportunity to do their job! In addition, overseas tutors might obtain **personal information** from the students they tutor.

After-school tutoring? In many cases, **federal money** pays for it. For example, 700+ libraries in 40 states use Tutor.com's services. CEO George Cigale states that at this time, 98% of his 500 tutors are stateside. **The U.S. Department of Education has not taken a stand on outsourcing. Public schools are expected to spend \$500 million on after-school tutoring this year.**

Smarrthinking, based in Washington, D.C. has 400 tutors, 20% of them outside the U.S.A. **A high percentage of them are in India and the Phillipines. There are numerous organizations against Americans being traded for cheaper foreign counterparts, including NO SLAVES.com.** They are a coalition of men and women from all walks of life in the United States who share one objective, to stop the trading of US citizens as commodities for cheap foreign labor.

Mr. Steve Pines, executive director of the Education Industry Assoc., a group that overseas for-profit education providers, says taxpayers "should not be supporting offshore educational staff as they do not understand our system of education, and their cultural and communication differences may impede student learning."

-editor

Sources: USA Today, CareerLauncher.com, Google.