

KOS

By Doug McGregor

Earlier in the autumn I found myself in an alarming and unexpected pickle: KOS canceled our internet service.

This had been building to a head since the early summer but KOS going nuclear by canceling our service was a complete shock. As we all know we have little to no choice in getting internet in the rural parts of the County. I don't have a plan B and I am scrambling to hopefully find one.

To understand this story I have to go back in time. We've been a KOS customer for over 11 years. The relationship initially was difficult. Speeds were often very slow, reliability was poor and there were frequent price increases. KOS' customer service was frequently defensive with one memorable condescending exchange trying to baffle me with techie BS. (I'm a telecoms engineer who spent a lot of time on transmission systems so it didn't work).

As time went on though, the technology improved and KOS seemed to stabilize and improve their network, quite possibly because of xplornet entering the market. While there were still problems from time to time (growing trees interfered with the signal or ice storms damaged connections) KOS began to improve and shine. We were happy with the improvements in service speeds and reliability and as our confidence grew we began to move other services over to the internet including our home phone. I also began to recommend KOS to people who needed service or were struggling with another provider.

However something changed in the early summer. We began to experience frequent short-duration service outages and dramatic fluctuations in speeds. What was once a pretty good service became unusable at times, often in the evening. Sometimes our home phone became so choppy we had to wander outside with a cell phone to find a signal to return a call. Video streaming often became impossible and even web browsing sessions would crash due to loss of service.

So what to do? Well I called KOS. They reluctantly engaged. To give them their due, they made 3 site visits and changed out equipment. However the service remained unreliable and at times was slower than a dial up modem. The last KOS team to visit still saw problems and said they would have to refer it to their infrastructure team.

Then nothing happened.

So I wrote the KOS President and after the best part of a week went by, I wrote the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-Television Services (CCTS). That inflamed KOS and the balance of the story culminated last week with KOS terminating my service. KOS did this despite knowing I had no options for internet access.

That sucks.

Few of us love our utilities but imagine being terminated despite never having missed a payment because they thought you complained too much?

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Now add to that the service provider uses a scarce and *PUBLIC* resource, i.e. radio frequencies. In almost all nations, radio frequencies are allocated via licenses and Canada is no exception. So how can a business terminate a customer's service which uses a public resource for what is rapidly becoming an essential service?

I use my internet service for banking, email, phone, entertainment, news and publishing Facebook and Web site updates for our beloved Milford Fall Fair (www.milfordfallfair.com). The internet has become an essential service to me. However, I am to be banished because I wasn't good enough to simply shut up and accept whatever service quality level they wanted to deliver.

So to you, dear readers, if you are a KOS subscriber I advise you to observe the title and be careful. Tread lightly lest you too be cast into the pits of oblivion.

Me ... I have no choice but to fight on but my next essay might have to be delivered by carrier pigeon despite this electronic era.

Anybody want to buy some used computers? (Some keyboards have recently received excessive pounding and have been in the proximity of bad language!).