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## Jacobs graduate helping fix computers remotely

By CHRIS FREEMAN - [cfreeman@nwherald.com](mailto:cfreeman@nwherald.com)

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CARY – Growing up in Algonquin, Michael Scherenberg was the neighborhood computer repairman.

So it should come as little surprise that the Jacobs High graduate decided to open a consumer IT business from home.

Scherenberg owns MS Tech Solutions, a company that focuses on small-business IT and tech consulting. The company launched **Fixit99.com** this year to bring consumer tech support straight to homes.

**Fixit99.com** handles all of the computer support that technicians used to do on site. Today, however, Scherenberg and his staff can handle customers' computer problems from **Fixit99.com's** office in Cary.



H. Rick Bamman – [hbamman@nwherald.com](mailto:hbamman@nwherald.com) **Fixit99.com** founder Michael Scherenberg (right) checks in with tech Taylor Wadlington (center) as Jeff Ward (left) takes a call in their support store in Cary. Scherenberg is a Jacobs graduate who got a computer degree at Purdue and worked in corporate IT before starting out on his own. (H. Rick Bamman ())

"We want to get the message across that the days of unplugging your computer and driving it to the big-box store to get fixed, those don't have to exist," he said.

**Fixit99.com** provides secure support remotely. Customers log onto **Fixit99.com's** site through a secure Internet connection. That provides the tech staff with the chance to clean out viruses from a computer, reinstall software or change the startup settings to improve performance.

"Some customers are concerned when we connect to their computer," Scherenberg said. "But it's a one-time secure connection that the customer initiates. They can watch us do whatever we need to do and it's 100 percent secure. Once we're done, the customer sees a visual representation that we're off their computer, and we can never initiate connections again.

"From a security connection, it's the strongest way possible. You're not leaving it at a store, or not watching the techs working. The remote service offers flexibility for the customer."

Scherenberg said his true passion for computers began in high school, and he graduated with a computer degree from Purdue University. He began working in the corporate world in IT support and engineering with Sears and Aon, but after seven years, it was time to do something else, he said.

"I wanted to focus on small-business needs," he said. "With this economy, businesses were downsizing and cutting their IT staff, and I wanted to do more of an on-demand service."

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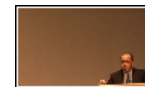
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In the years since his interest in computers peaked, Scherenberg said the business model of computer support changed. And that's why he started **Fixit99.com**, with on-demand tech support for a flat rate of \$99.

"When you would buy a computer for \$1,000, you wouldn't mind spending \$200 or \$300 to fix it," he said. "It was an expensive investment. But now with computers below \$400, the business model of having someone drive out and fix it no longer makes sense. Now we can have a tech out there. We can create a service the customer can count on, and it's a U.S.-based company."

Scherenberg said business had been "great" since **Fixit99.com**'s launch, with calls doubling each month since June and a growing customer base.

The service is not yet 24/7, but the owner said all requests would be handled the same day, whether by phone, e-mail or online inquiry.

"If we establish a connection and don't fix it, we won't charge anything," he said. "We won't charge them for something that can't get fixed."



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