

THE DOCTOR IS IN: RON ELKIN SAVES THE DAY

By Margaret Leahy As printed in Ipswich Neighbors, December 2016

For many of us living in this day and age, our computers are extensions of our bodies. Whether we conduct most of our business on our phones, iPads, or personal computers, that glowing screen is our window into the rest of the world. We use these devices to communicate with our children, close business deals, or learn about life on the other side of the globe. And like our bodies, if we mistreat our computers, we pay for it down the road. As your doctor will tell you, preventative measures are the key to optimal health; virus protection, regular maintenance, and calling at the first sign of something “off” will save you myriad headaches in your relationship with your computer. For the best of times and the worst of times, the Computer Doctor is at your service.

Ron Elkin is the Computer Doctor, based in Ipswich and servicing the North Shore and southern New Hampshire. The medical language surrounding his business is no accident: “I went to college with the intention of going to pharmacy school; all in my family were pharmacists,” he explains. “I like the medical reference. Our tagline is, ‘Your prescription for computing health.’” He founded his company, the Computer Doctor, in late 2001, a year that he recalls was “a big negative in terms of technology,” considering the spate of layoffs due to the poor economy. Following his graduation from Penn State, Ron worked for several different companies and industries, focusing on “bringing technology” to solve a myriad of business problems. It was an exciting time, developing and managing these dynamic solutions. In the late 1990s Ron went to work for Digital Equipment Corporation, where he helped manage the Y2K changeover program. Early in 2001, Ron himself was laid off, along with many others, when Hewlett-Packard acquired ownership of DEC from Compaq.

Ron spent that summer sailing his boat and brainstorming. He possessed a business degree, and knew there was a need for highly-skilled computer whizzes to help those at the mercy of Dell or Verizon customer service representatives solving their tech problems. During his stint in the corporate world, he had performed computer-doctoring services for friends and family on the weekends. At the time, many people had desktop computers, and the thought of lugging them anywhere to be serviced was daunting. The idea for a computer doctor that made house calls was born. To this day, house calls are the Computer Doctor’s claim to fame. Ron has a team of PC and Apple experts at his disposal, and he performs most of the house calls himself.

“I pride myself on being calm, patient, and having the ability to sift through the morass of stuff and get right to the issue,” says Ron. “You have to get the customer to focus on the right things.” Most of the distress calls he gets stem from a lack of knowledge of how these machines work. According to Ron, there is a lot of incomplete information online, which is where most people will look initially for help. Even when a call is made to Verizon or HP, the representatives themselves are relative novices, and will merely read the handbook back to the customer. Even though much of what Ron sees are simple fixes for him, there are times when he needs to call a customer service line—but he can usually tell them exactly where to look in the manual for further assistance.