

Alternative Wire-less Networking

There have been a ton of people interested in wireless networking at my shop over this past year. Many people have added second or an third computers to the their home this past year and are now interest in ways to link those computers together so that everyone can use their broadband Internet service. In many cases having to run unsightly wires on walls and around the trim on the floor is a roadblock to completing this task.

The last networking article I wrote focused on the use of a wired router linking multiple computer systems together using cat 5 cable. This article will focus on alternative networking methods without the use of cat 5 cables. The first and possibility the most popular cat 5 free networking is called wireless networking. The two most popular types are 802.11b and 802.11g. These protocols are standards that are produced by a none profit organization of professionals. This organization is called the IEEE (Eye-triple-E). The purpose of the organization is to develop worldwide standards in the electrical, electronic, and computer industries. With these standards in place a person purchasing one brand of components can be assured that it will work with any IEEE compatible brand of components.

The first of the IEEE standards has a maximum data throughput of 11 megabits/second. It is currently the most popular wireless networking standard in the world. In fact with a wirelessly equipped laptop you can currently go into many public places and hop on their wireless network to surf the Internet and check e-mail absolutely free. Some of these locations include the Lawson McGhee library, the Downtown Krystal restaurants and numerous hotels. Other places such as coffee shops and truck stops offer a low cost connection to their wireless network. A newer wireless standard to be adopted by the IEEE is 802.11g technologies. This standard is backwards compatible with the 802.11b devices but offers a higher data transfer speed of 54 megabits/second when connecting to other 802.11g devices.

If you already have an IEEE 802.11b wireless network in your home you probably do not have to rush out to purchase the newer “g” technology. Most people use the wireless network in their home to surf the Internet. The information bottleneck is going to be in your Internet connection. Comcast cable has a maximum throughput of 4 megabits/second and DSL has a maximum throughput of 3 megabits/second. Because of this limit you will never overwork your 802.11b network unless you are transferring large files between computers in your home.

There is a draw back to wireless technology however. Some homes with a lot of metal in them, such as air conditioning ducts or metal studs make a wireless network very unstable. Another technology called power line networking overcomes this disadvantage by transforming your power lines into network cables. This is a properitery standard that will only allow same brand devices the ability to communicate with each other. This technology has similar data through put to the 802.11b wireless standard and is a good alternative for a flaky wireless signal.

Wireless networks are pretty easy to setup, however making sure that they are secure can be tricky. If you don't set your network up properly you may find that your computer system is vulnerable to hackers. If you have questions setting up your Cat 5 free network give Thomas, Roger, or Justin a call at Computer Depot 947-0749 or e-mail me at sales@computerdepotonline.com

