

Stupid Wireless Tricks

The term “wireless” can refer to so many things when referencing computers and computer product. Today’s lesson is only on the type of wireless that you might typically have in your home or office. Your Internet access still comes into the building via a physical piece of cable, be it Cable, ADSL, Radio, or Satellite (this will not work with Dial-Up Internet). Once the Internet is into the home, here is where you take over and make the Internet WIRELESS throughout your home. The IEEE standard for this type of wireless is known as 802.11.

Ok, so now that you have the Internet coming into the home, your next step is installing a WIRELESS ROUTER. A ROUTER takes the Internet feed and “splits it” so that more than one computer can access the Internet at the same time. A typical wireless router has four ports for plugging in full size desktop computers, AND an antenna for connecting laptops communicating via the 802.11 standard. ALL laptops manufactured in the past five years or so have 802.11 built into them, so your laptop is probably ready to go.

Next, instead of plugging your Internet feed into just one computer, you plug the Internet feed into your new WIRELESS ROUTER’s “in” or “WAN” port, next plug in any of your full size desktop computers to one of the four “out” ports on the router, and then use the antenna on the router to connect all your laptops to. Simply turn on your laptop, and use the “network connections” on your laptop to see if it shows you a wireless router to connect to. Unless you change the name of your router, it will show up as “default” or “d-link” or “Linksys”. If you want to change the name of your router, please see the manual that came with your router.

Your router is now “broadcasting” the Internet signal to a radius of approx 150ft or so depending on the building structure and the strength of the router signal. You can now “roam” around your house with your laptop all the while being connected to the Internet via your wireless router.

Remember, this signal can be picked up by anyone who is within the range of your router, which is why if you live in urban areas, you will likely want to put a password on your router. This “password” is known as the WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy). In a simple setup a WEP is a 10-number code that you will setup on your router, then when you login to the router with your laptop you will input the same 10-number code. Your laptop will likely “remember” this number so you won’t have to put it in every time you want to use the Internet, only the first time. Those of us in rural areas are unlikely to have someone parked outside of our house surfing off our router, so a WEP is not so important to have.

If you have a laptop and you have High-Speed Internet, go get yourself a WIRELESS ROUTER and stop being “tethered” by a piece of cable to the Internet. Go wireless, it’s easy!