

Popular Threads on Solosez

Router Recommendation Needed.

(This conversation took place in the space of two days on Solosez, less time than most spend on hold waiting for tech support!)

I need to buy a wireless router to network two computers: my shiny new one (thanks to Mike Phillips for all of his assistance) and my old one, which will serve as a data backup (among other things) (yes, I'm also going to back up my data to DVD -- more capacity than a CD -- meaning that I will have *tertiary* backup). Any recommendations on specific models of wireless routers? Lisa Solomon, Ardsley, New York

I favor the Linksys devices. Just installed the G with SpeedBoost at my office. Yes, it is faster, but not a big difference unless you're moving huge amounts of data from the server to the workstation. Simple documents and files move at about the same perceived speed as a B system.

Bruce Dorner, Londonderry, NH

Ok, follow-up question from the "computer impaired." The brand new computer is near the actual phone jack; the old computer is not. Do I have to buy a wireless networking card and install it in the old computer in order to get this setup to work? If so, are routers commonly sold packaged with a wireless networking card?

Lisa Solomon

When you say "phone jack" are you saying you use a dial-up connection to the Internet? What exactly are you trying to accomplish? With more details I'm sure Solosez can come to your rescue.

Bruce Dorner

No, I have DSL, but (and correct me if I'm wrong) doesn't the computer have to be hooked to the DSL modem, which as to be hooked to the phone line (and the knee bone is connected to the leg none . . .)?

All I want to do is allow two computers in different rooms to access the internet at the same time and allow the computers to "talk" to each other for backup purposes.

Lisa Solomon



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Yes, you'll need a wireless card in the computer that's not near the router (but see below); no, routers don't generally come with a wireless card. It might be cheaper to buy another wireless router to connect to the old computer and use that to join the network rather than buying a wireless card. That would also keep you from having to crack the case, if you're squeamish about that.

Steve O'Donnell

Really? How much do wireless cards usually cost (general range)? I'm not squeamish about opening the case

Lisa Solomon

The router gets connected to the DSL modem with an Ethernet cable, the new computer gets connected to the router with another Ethernet cable. You'll probably need to open your web browser and point it to a certain location to configure the router. You're probably using PPPoE with your DSL modem so make sure you have your username and password handy.

Steve O'Donnell

Probably about \$50, but since it's going in a desktop, I think you'll also need a PCI card adapter which is probably under \$20. Buy.com has a good deal on wireless products running now.

<http://www.buy.com/retail/computers/store.asp?loc=15681>

Steve O'Donnell

If I understand the topology correctly, I suggest getting a PCI wireless card for the old computer as opposed to having a NIC in the old computer attached to a second wireless router. They work OK, but there can be reception issues given the fact the antenna is up against a large metal object. If reception might be an issue, then you might want a WiFi access point as opposed to a router for flexibility of location and connect to the access point using the existing (?) network card in the old computer. There are decent products on the market that include a few wired ports and WiFi along with the router functions for use with DSL or Cable. Using two WiFi routers might get a little complicated and in any event you would not be using the router functions on one in any event.

Ed Lawson

Keeping in mind that the old computer does not have an existing network card, what would the approximate cost be for the WiFi setup you recommend? Also, what is easier to set up, wireless networking (I notice that there is a networking wizard in WinXP Pro) or WiFi? Finally, what

are the "decent products" you are referring to? Lisa Solomon

Ed is, of course, right about a access point rather than a router, no point in paying for something you're not going to use. I didn't even think that there might not be a network card in the old computer, that's the first thing you should check. If you have a port that looks like a large phone jack, then you have a network card.

Steve O'Donnell

I suggest you should consider solution that does not include wireless--even if it involves some difficulty in running wire--phone or Ethernet.

For two computers to do what you want, you need one connected to modem (which is connected to phone). I'm quite sure that when the other is networked it will access modem/phone/internet through the first computer. One--maybe both--computers probably have a networking card. If you go wireless, you will need wireless card & router & will be subject to the problems of setting up a wireless network--more difficult than hard wire. If you don't foresee need for other wireless later--maybe laptop--it may be simpler to find a way to get phone line to the other computer. If so, you can probably network through the phone line. One member reported that he is doing that very successfully.

I'll leave the detail to those more able, but wanted to be sure you understood the options.

John P. Page

John's point that you should explore running an Ethernet to the second computer is a good one. You would avoid the various "challenges" of wireless.

But you could use a router (a router, not a wireless access point/router combination. DSL connects to router, each computer directly connects to router, set up a local peering network on the LAN side of the router. I'd recommend one of the Linksys Router/Firewall units. You might choose to get one with wireless built in, then disable the wireless connection until such time in the future as you might need it.

Mike Riddle

This is the ticket right here. Let's say you have two computers: (1) A new laptop that you want to be able to move around and access the internet wirelessly; and (2) the old computer. Assuming computer number 2 won't be moving around, I'd probably just run cat 5 cable to it from the router if it's not too far. It's much easier in the end. Then I'd connect computer number 1 wirelessly.

It's important to understand what the router does. Then all this makes sense. The router connects to the DSL modem and connects to the Internet.

It's the thing that makes the connection to your Internet account and keeps it connected. As far as the DSL provider is concerned, it is the computer that's connected to the Internet. If you have a static IP number assigned by your provider, the router gets assigned this number and uses it to communicate with the provider. The same is true if the provider dynamically assigns an IP number. The router claims it and holds it.

So how do your computers get out to the Internet? Well, when you turn one on, the router assigns the computer its own local IP address. Then when you access the Internet the router takes any request you make from that local IP address, translates that number to the outside IP address the router is holding, and then sends your request out to the Internet provider. When the info comes back, the router does the same thing in reverse translating from the outside IP address to the local IP address of the machine that has requested the info.

If it's going to be difficult to run wire, then others are correct in suggesting that you could put a PCI wireless card in machine number 2 and hook it in that way. But if you're not going to be moving around the machine and the cable run isn't that far, I've found it easier to just plug in a cable.

Jake London

Here's an inexpensive Linksys product that gives you wired and wireless in one box --- and it's easy to install. Just add a wired or wireless card to the computers as needed and you're done. And this should be an under \$70 purchase. Available generally at places such as BestBuy, CompUSA, Circuit City, Staples, etc. Or, just shop on-line.

<http://www.linksys.com/products/product.asp?grid=33&scid=35&prid=601>

Bruce Dorner

I bought this very one off the shelf at Radio Shack last week for \$59 with a \$10 rebate.

Joe Lamont

RadioShack had this for \$59 last week--the same price as the related Linksys non-wireless router. It has an internet port and 4 Ethernet ports. I would get the wireless router even if you're going to run cable to the other desktop. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon and for the rest of your life, you'll want wireless networking. Since there isn't a huge price differential between wireless and wired routers you might as well get the wireless.

Steve O'Donnell

You should be able to get a decent PCI wireless card for around \$50 at most.

Also, what is easier to set up, wireless networking (I > notice that there is a networking wizard in WinXP Pro) or WiFi?

I apologize for throwing in a different term. They are the same.

I have used Linksys and Netgear products and for home or SOHO they are fine. There are other brands and I do not mean to say those are the best, etc. If you want to go wireless, then get what will be called a wireless router and make sure it has a few Ethernet ports for the wired portion of the network. I suspect they all will have at least three or four. When you get the router, which is the box that you attach to the DSL unit with a cable, it should come with a cable and this cable will look like any other networking cable. However it may or may not be the same. Be sure to use it between the router and the DSL unit. I am assuming there are physical reasons for not using a totally wired network which is usually easier to set up properly than a wireless network due to security issues.

Ed Lawson

I just saw this on spoofee.com, Amazon has a 802.11b PCI card for \$9.99 after rebate. <http://tinyurl.com/5t654>

Also from spoofee.com, buy.com has a wireless router and wireless card bundle for \$19.99 after rebate.

Steve O'Donnell

I need to have wireless access to old computer, but can have wired access to new computer (both desktops). New computer is the one that needs to have faster Internet access; old computer is the one that needs the adapter card.

What's the consensus on the value for the money of the following items paired together

[short url](#)

and

<http://tinyurl.com/5t654> (from Amazon, courtesy of Steve O'Donnell)

Lisa Solomon

They "should" work fine together. Not sure what a Linksys G wireless card would cost, but if its only another \$40 or so I'd go with it to avoid any incompatibility issues. There should not be any as that is why there are standards, but who knows. I have mixed and matched in the past without any problems.

Until you get a much faster broadband than you are likely to have currently under DSL, the network speed even under the old protocol will be faster than your connection to the Internet.

Ed Lawson

Lisa, you're going to backup data over your network to the old computer, right? Depending on the size of the backup, an 11Mbps connection can be annoyingly slow. It probably won't matter if you're planning on doing a backup of large files at night, but if you want something approaching the speed of a wired connection you'll be disappointed. I think the faster ones are at 54Mbps, although there may be faster wireless systems.

Steve O'Donnell

Anything that is 802.11b should play nicely with anything else at 802.11b.
Check out <http://tinyurl.com/48s5y>
Steve O'Donnell

Lisa, I'd go with the Linksys WRT54g for the benefit, whatever it turns out to be in practice, of the faster wireless connection.

Mike Riddle

I saw a number of responses, but none recommending the new Belkin pre-N. I just ditched my Netgear for the Belkin pre-N and am as pleased as punch. Much faster and better range. Sure, it may cost you twice as much - but one reason there are so many deals on the others is that they are soon to be off the market as competitors to the Belkin join in.
The setup was a snap.

John Mitchell

The Belkin pre-N received a huge thumbs up in Thursday's Wall Street Journal from technology columnist Walt Mossberg, which is the equivalent of the Good Housekeeping seal of approval. ;)
Dave Rakowski

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