

**Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
Seminar**

**Basic Home Networking
Wired and Wireless**

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This 2 1/2 hour seminar will cover basic networking concepts, discuss equipment and software needed to set up a simple wireless home local area network, connect to the Internet and share files and printers between two or more PCs. We'll also keep some time open to answer your networking questions.

This seminar's target audience is users who are pretty comfortable with their PC and Windows and want to move up to taking better advantage of having multiple PCs.

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Where to Find the Seminar Materials

Sun City Summer Computer Club Website:

<http://www.scsc.com/smnr>

– Acrobat file of these slides and Notes

Basic Home Networking
Wired and Wireless

Go to the “smnr” page on the Club web site using the link above.

Find the link to this “Basic Home Networking” presentation, which is saved as an Adobe Acrobat PDF file.

Click the link to open the PDF document.

From there, you can print the document by clicking on the printer icon or you can save it to your hard disk by clicking the diskette icon.

Seminar Agenda

- Basic Concepts and Terminology
- Helpful Web Site Links
- Wireless Networking Concepts and Hardware
- Demo - Setting Up a Wireless Network
- -- *Bio Break (~10 min)*
- Key Network Protocols and Services
- Shared Files and Printers
- Open Q and A

Basic Home Networking
Wired and Wireless

Our goal in this presentation is to cover many of the basic concepts of home networking. After that, we'll get session attendees up and running on a simple, secure home network that mixes wired and wireless connections.

Basic Concepts

- **Networks allow computers to communicate.**
- **Why Have a Home Network?**
 - PCs can share: files, printers, Internet connection.
 - Each PC can back up the other's data.
- **Simple Home Networks are easy to set up.**
 - Network cables, router or switch.
 - Enable client / server software configuration.
- **Wireless networking uses 2.4 GHz radio spectrum.**
 - 11 Mbits per second (802.11b), 54 Mbits per second (802.11g), (up to) 108 Mbits per second (802.11 "super-g"), (up to) 300 Mbits per second (802.11 "draft n")

Basic Home Networking
Wired and Wireless

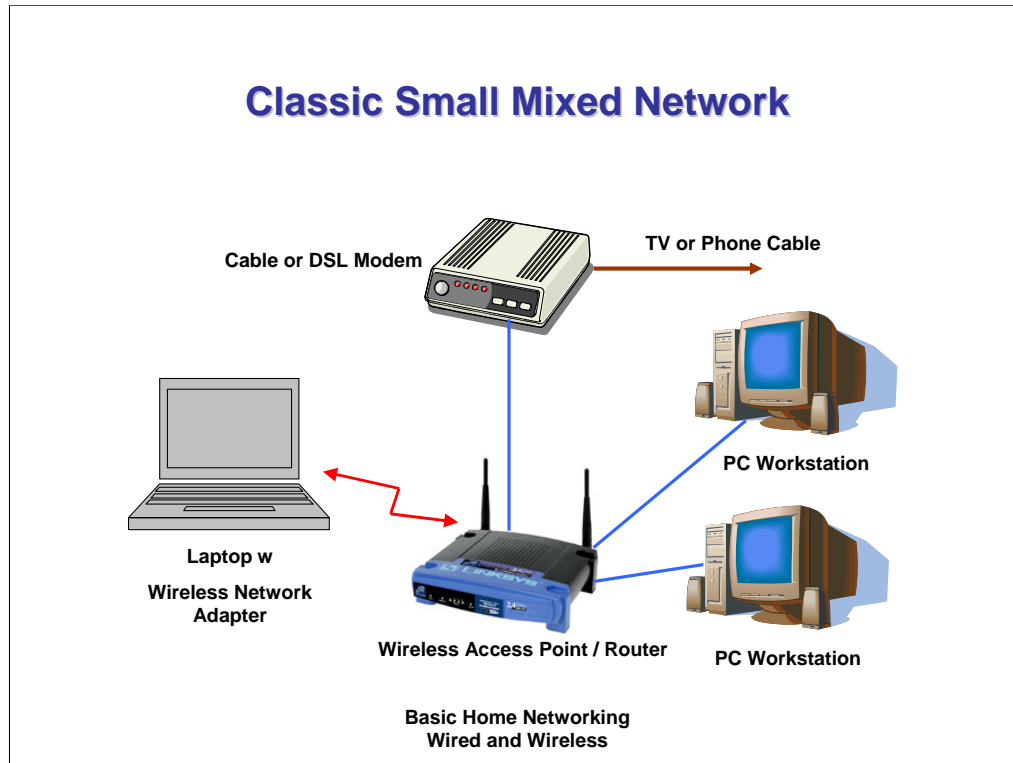
Networking is the process of connecting two or more computers together so that they can communicate with one another. Networks can also communicate with other networks, making possible vast interlinked sets of computers.

Our focus is on relatively simple home networks of two or a few PCs, connected to each other using Ethernet cables and wireless connections. Using a simple network of this type allows the connected PCs to share printers and files and also, if you have a wide-band Internet connection, such as DSL or Cox cable, to share that connection as well. This permits all PCs on the net to concurrently access the Internet via the high-speed connection.

As we will see in the following discussion, simple mixed (wired and wireless) home networks are easy to set up. You do need some equipment and you need to configure some software to get it all to work, but generally, once a network is set up, it needs little if any additional tinkering, at least until you add another PC or change some other aspect of the configuration.

Wireless networking uses a "hub and spoke" topology. There is a central switching point, the Wireless Access Point / Router (WAP) that all the other remote nodes communicate with. Each remote node sends and receives via its own attached or built-in Wireless Network Adapter (WNA).

Classic Small Mixed Network



Above is the archetypical simple mixed wired and wireless network configuration diagram.

We have one or more PC workstations, connected by Ethernet cables to an integrated Wireless Access Point / Router. The router provides high speed connections between each of the other Ethernet “wired” devices connected to it. The “wired” links run at 100 million bits per second.

We also have a laptop computer connected by a wireless link to the same WAP / router. The wireless link may run at (up to) either 11 million bits per second, 54 million bits per second, (up to) 108 million bits per second or even (up to) 300 million bits per second. However, due to distance, obstacles and interference, it may run much slower.

In addition to its routing firmware, the router may also contain Internet firewall firmware.

The router is connected by Ethernet cable to a cable, satellite or DSL modem.

The cable, satellite or DSL modem is connected to the TV coaxial cable or to the DSL telephone jack, which provides the connection to the external Internet.

We will look at each of these components in more detail in following slides.

Networking Hardware (1)

- **Network Interface Card / Chip (NIC)**
 - Every NIC has a unique 6 byte (48 bit) physical address.
 - Try IPCONFIG /ALL to see yours.
- **Ethernet Cable (Category 5 or 6)**
 - Costs about \$1 per foot retail for short cables.
 - 8 wires inside.
 - Use RJ45 telephone jacks as connectors.
- **Switch**
 - Usually 4 Ethernet ports + a WAN port or Uplink port.
 - Also comes in 8 or 16 ports.
 - Newer switches are auto-sensing – any port can be uplink.
 - One switch can connect to another switch.
 - Often a switch is built into a Router or Wireless Access Point (WAP).

Basic Home Networking
Wired and Wireless

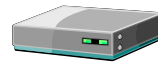
Network interface cards (NICs) mount inside a PC or may be integrated as chips onto the PC motherboard. They provide the hardware send / receive / control interfaces to an Ethernet cable. Almost all NICs now support dual speeds of 10 and 100 million bits per second. The NIC automatically senses what speed the rest of the network is running and chooses the corresponding speed. The newest generation of NICs can run at 1 billion bits per second (gigabit Ethernet), but such speeds are overkill for home networks today unless you want to stream video to your TV.

Ethernet cables come in two speed ratings: Category 5 for 10/100/1000 Megabit, Category 6 for 10+ Gigabit. They are shielded, with 4 twisted pairs inside, and have 8-pin RJ 45 snap-in jacks at each end. Ethernet cables can be up to 330 feet long.

A hub or switch is a simple interconnection device that has sockets for RJ 45 connectors from Ethernet cables. A hub is an older, “dumb” device that takes every message it receives and sends it to every other device connected to it. A switch looks at the target NIC address in each message and only sends the message out the Ethernet port that the target NIC is plugged into. A hub or switch also acts as an amplifier, so that two PCs can effectively be 600 feet apart if the hub / switch is centered between two long cables.

Networking Hardware (2)

- **Router**
 - Provides basic switch functionality.
 - Provides dynamic IP address (DHCP) services.
 - Provides Network Address Translation (isolates internal LAN net from Internet).
- **Cable or DSL Modem**
 - Ethernet to Cable or Phone converter.
 - Has to be activated with your Internet Service Provider.



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Routers are switches with a much higher level of intelligence. Routers have built in functions to dynamically assign “private” IP addresses from a specified range (DHCP). The router also performs transparent mapping of these private IP addresses into a single “public” IP address assigned by the cable or DSL Internet Service Provider. This makes your entire in-house network look like a single PC to the outside world. Routers may also include firewall functionality. Firewalls effectively block incoming TCP/IP connections from all but a handful of standard, “safe” ports. This keeps out hackers.

With either Cox cable, satellite broadband or Embarq DSL, whether running a wired, wireless or mixed network, you must have a router in place to allow more than one PC to simultaneously access the Internet. These ISPs only allow one physical connection, i.e. a single IP address, to their network from a given connection point.

A cable or DSL modem converts Ethernet messaging signals to signals compatible with either your cable TV wiring or your special DSL telephone wiring. Cox cable uses two reserved digital channels for the incoming and outgoing message signals. DSL uses specially tuned phone wiring to allow the high speed signals.

Both cable and DSL are asymmetric. On Cox, incoming messages travel at about 6 Megabits per second; outgoing messages travel at 512 Kilobits per second.

A new form of Fiber DSL (FIOS) currently can deliver 15 Million bits/sec, but isn't offered in Las Vegas.

Wireless Networking Hardware

Wireless Access Point / Router (WAP)

- Provides basic switch functionality.
- Provides dynamic IP address services.
- Provides Network Address Translation (Isolates internal LAN net from Internet).
- Handles 802.11 wireless protocols.



PC Card Wireless Network Adapter

- Remote wireless connection.
- Now built in to most laptops.



USB /wireless Network Adapter

- Remote wireless connection.



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A Wireless Access Point / Router combines the features of the router and the central 802.11b, 802.11g, 802.11g+ (MIMO) or 802.11n wireless transmitter receiver. It provides the central hub of a wireless network.

Wireless network adapters are attached to a PC or laptop and provide the remote ends of a wireless network. Adapters come in several configurations: PCI cards (for desktops), PC cards (for laptops), USB (very flexible). On most new laptops, the Wireless network Adapter is built in and controlled by an on/off switch.

Networking Web Links

- <http://www.linksys.com>
- <http://www.netgear.com/>
- <http://www.dlink.com/>
- <http://www.belkin.com/>
- <http://airlink101.com>
- <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/networking.mspix>
- <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/networking/default.mspix>
- <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,1277020,00.asp>
- Windows Help and Support (Networking and the Web)

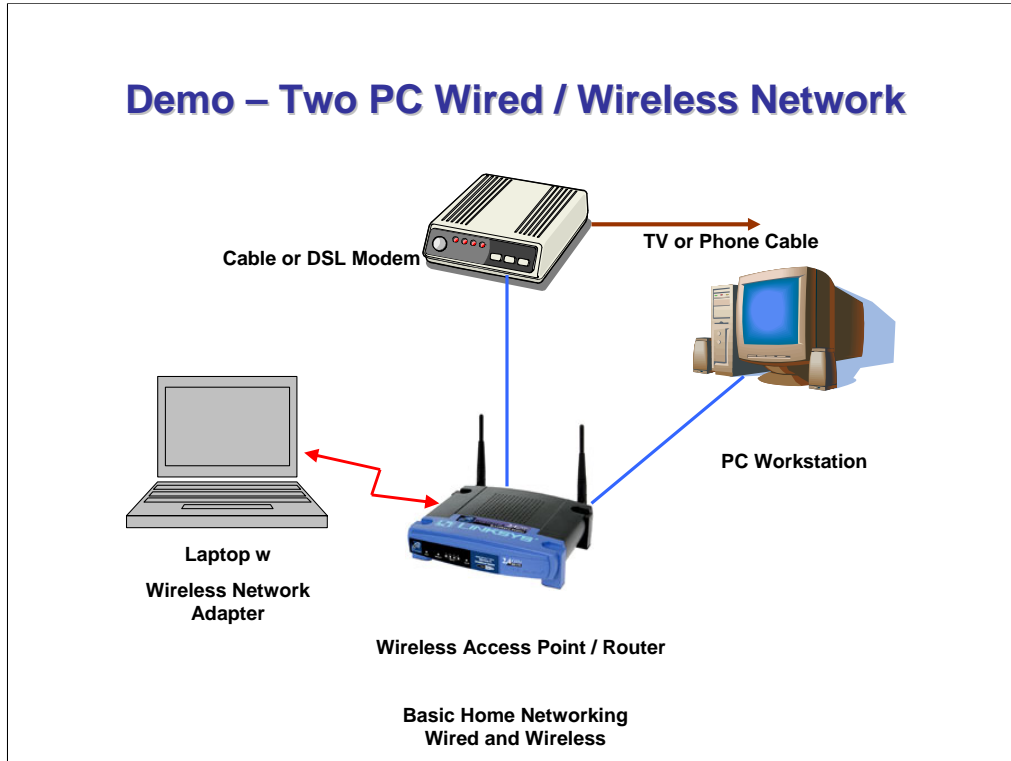
**Basic Home Networking
Wired and Wireless**

The above hyperlinks go to the major home networking equipment vendors' web sites. All these vendors provide a wealth of technical information.

There is also a link to the Microsoft home networking site, which again has much useful information.

Finally, the Windows Help systems have extensive information on networking which is worth reading for more information.

Demo – Two PC Wired / Wireless Network



Above is a simplified two PC mixed wired and wireless network configuration diagram, a simpler version of what we reviewed above..

This is the configuration we will now set up in the demo.

There is some simple hardware cabling to do.

The rest is software and system configuration.

Bio-Break

10 Minutes

Basic Home Networking
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Demo – Setting Up a Two-PC LAN (1)

- **Read the vendor instructions – TWICE!**
- **On newer PCs and laptops, Ethernet NICs are already installed or built in. Most laptops also have built in 802.11g.**
- **Plug in an Ethernet cable from PC to WAP/Router.**
- **Plug in an Ethernet cable from Cable/DSL modem to WAP/Router's WAN port.**
- **Power cycle both the Cable/DSL modem and the WAP/Router.**

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Wired and Wireless

There's not much to comment on here. Just follow the steps.

It's important to power cycle both the Cable/Satellite/DSL modem and the WAP/Router so they will discover each other correctly. Power on the modem first, then the WAP/Router.

Demo – Setting Up a Two-PC LAN (2)

- **Configure the Wireless Access Point using the setup program provided by the vendor.**
 - SSID (change it from the default).
 - Administrator access password (change it from the default).
 - Recommended - configure WPA (or WEP) security on the router (see notes).
- **Connect to the WAP / Router using IE to re-check configuration.**
- **Install any required network drivers on the wireless PC(s).**
- **Plug in the Wireless PC card or USB connection.**
- **Windows XP should automatically discover the wireless access point and run a wizard to let you join the wireless LAN.**

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All vendors provide a setup software tool to allow you to configure the WAP / Router from a wired connection. This setup tool does basic configuration. Outside hackers know all the vendors' defaults. To be secure it's important to change the SSID from the vendor's default (e.g. "Linksys") to some custom value that only you know. For example: "I_BURT_T". Also change the vendor's default administrator access password (e.g. "admin") to something else. For example: "I7I0B9T5T".

Once the WAP / router is set up, you should reboot your PC to get a DHCP IP address from the new router. It usually will be in the 192.168.x.y range (x and y vary by vendor). For Mac Airports, the addresses are in the 10.0.x.y range.

Next use Internet Explorer to connect to the WAP / router at the vendor's designated IP address (192.168.1.1 for Linksys). The WAP / router has a built in mini web server with configuration screens to allow you to fine tune and adjust advanced settings. Login using your new administrator password.

You may want to turn off SSID broadcasting to make your wireless LAN invisible to outsiders unless they already know your SSID.

Finally, to secure your wireless network from outside hackers, configure encryption to use WPA or WPA2 (recommended) or 128 bit WEP (if your wireless devices don't support WPA) security. Once security has been enabled, any PC that wants to connect to this access point must be configured with the WPA shared key or one of the generated WEP security keys. So write down the WPA shared key and/or a few of the four WEP keys generated.

When joining the wireless LAN on the remote laptop, you will need to set the mode (WPA or WEP) and enter a valid WPA or WEP key to communicate successfully.

Demo – Setting Up a Two-PC LAN (3)

- **Set up the LAN Connection on each PC (use Wizard)**
 - Specify Workgroup name and PC name.
 - Don't use default: "MSHOME" or "WORKGROUP"!
 - On XP, may need to force NetBIOS over TCP/IP
- **Check and adjust LAN Connection's Settings.**
 - Control Panel's Network Connections applet.
 - Go back to check and refine Wizard's settings.
 - Enable Windows Firewall.
- **Optional – on XP, may need to install IPX / SPX Protocol.**
 - Better, more automatic protocol for internal LAN.
 - PCs automatically detect each other.

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Sample Workgroup name: "BURT_HOME_WG".

Windows networking is based on the Net BIOS protocol, which is not routable, so you need to ensure the network is using NetBIOS over TCP/IP option. This option is set in the TCP/IP properties dialog or by the Network Setup Wizard.

Optional on XP: To install IPX / SPX Netware protocol, you must go to the Control Panel's Network Connections applet. Right click on the PC's LAN Connection and the click Properties. If the IPX / SPX protocol is not installed, click Add and then choose Protocol. Finally select IPX / SPX. Windows will then complete the install. This can help when the PCs can't "see" each other via TCP/IP.

It's important to enable the Windows XP or Vista Firewall at least temporarily to protect your PC while you are doing the setups. Otherwise a virus, worm or Trojan Horse might sneak in the back door. Later on, consider installing a more robust software firewall like Zone Alarm, Comodo, Kerio or Norton.

Demo – Setting Up a Two-PC LAN (4)

- **Reboot both PCs to ensure all software & settings are clean.**
- **Check PCs can “see” each other (Use My Network Places).**
- **Try your Internet connection from both PCs.**

**Basic Home Networking
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If everything is working, you can feel proud of yourself.

If not, recheck the various steps and read the vendor’s setup guide again.

TCP / IP Key Protocols

- **TCP/IP (Base-level Internet Protocol)**
 - Packet-based messaging.
 - Multiple packets per message.
 - Each packet is an Envelope surrounding Data.
- **HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol - World-Wide-Web)**
- **FTP (File Transfer Protocol)**
- **SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol – E-mail Send)**
- **POP3 (Post Office Protocol 3 – E-mail Receive)**

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TCP/IP is the core messaging protocol used by computers to communicate over the Internet. Message streams are broken up into small “packets” (size varies) by the sender. Each outbound packet has a set of beginning and ending bytes that make up an envelope, plus the actual data to be sent. The envelope includes the address of the sender, the address of the receiver, a sequence number, an error detection and correction check-sum and other useful bits of information to help the Internet get the packet to its destination. The receiver collects the incoming packets, checks them for errors and reassembles them into the correct sequence. If a packet is lost or has an unrecoverable error, the receiver will send a small message to the sender asking for a re-transmit.

HTTP (Hyper Text Transfer Protocol) uses TCP/IP to send and receive information specifically structured as web pages. A web browser such as Internet Explorer sends requests for web-page content to a web server at some specified address. The web server responds by sending back the requested web page content.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) uses TCP/IP to support uploading and downloading files between your PC and a remote FTP server.

SMTP and POP3 use TCP/IP to send and receive e-mail address between your PC and a remote e-mail server.

TCP/IP Name / Address Services

- **Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP)**
 - Address server automatically assigns a dynamic IP address to requesting PCs.
 - IP address is “leased” to the PC for a set length of time (e.g. 4, 8, 12 or 24 hours). A PC can “renew” the lease.
- **Domain Name Services (DNS)**
 - Resolves host names like AOL.COM to IP addresses (e.g. 172.20.148.50)
 - Experiment with PING command.
 - Cox.Net DNS servers at: 68.111.16.30 and 68.111.16.25.

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Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) is a service that dynamically assigns IP addresses to network computers (PCs, routers, printers, other devices). Each such IP address is leased to the requesting PC for a set length of time, such as 12 or 24 hours. A computer can renew or release its lease. Windows XP requests a new lease each time it boots up. The DHCP server has a defined “pool” of address it can lease out. For your local local router, typical IP addresses in the pool will range from: 192.168.1.100 to 192.168.1.199 – i.e. 100 addresses out of a possible 255. The others are reserved for permanent static assignment to devices like print or database servers. Note the IP address series starting with 192.168.x.y are “special”. Those addresses cannot be directly accessed from computers outside your private LAN. The router uses Network Address Translation (NAT) to transparently route traffic between computers on your private LAN and external computers on the public Internet.

Domain Name Services (DNS) servers are special computers on the public Internet that convert readable domain names to IP addresses. ISPs like Cox.net, Earthlink.net, AT&T.net all have their own DNS servers. These DNS servers themselves form a network along with the main domain name registration services, such as Network Solutions. These DNS servers regularly synchronize with each other so that most requests to resolve a domain name can be processed by a nearby DNS server. Normally on Windows, you can just let Windows TCP/IP automatically find the nearest DNS server.

Key Local Networking Services

- **Client For Microsoft Networks**
 - Allows a PC to connect to shared files and printers on another networked PC in the same Work Group.
- **File and Printer Sharing for Microsoft Networks**
 - Allows a PC to share its own printers and files with other networked PCs in the same Work Group.

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The Client for Microsoft Networks service is the core service that allows a Windows PC to access shared files and printers on other PCs on the same Workgroup on a LAN. Originally known as MS-Net or NetBIOS, this service allows a PC to “map” a logical drive to a shared folder on another PC. It also allows a PC to “add” a logical printer that physically resides on another PC.

File and Printer Sharing for Microsoft Networks is the core service that allows a Windows PC to share its printers and file folders with other PCs on the same Workgroup on a LAN. Printer shares are defined in the Control panel / Printer applet. File folder shares are defined using the Windows Explorer’s “Share As” function. Each shared folder is given a “Share Name” and other properties of the share are set. Important Note ... the underlying file folder’s access control properties must be consistent with those of the share. Otherwise remote users will not be able to access the folder, even though they can connect to the share.

A particular PC may be set up as just a client, just a file and print server or as both. For a small network, it’s generally most effective to have each PC operate as both a client and a server. Each PC can then function as a backup server for the other.

Shared Files and Printers

- **Create some file folder and printer “shares”.**
 - Windows Explorer “Sharing” menu.
 - Make them accessible by “Everyone”.
 - Printers and Faxes applet “Share as”
- **Connect to those “shares” from the other PC.**
 - Windows Explorer Tools / Map function (\\pcname\sharename).
 - Creates a logical drive that points to a remote folder.
 - Control Panel “Add Printer” function (network printer).
- **Disconnect from a “share”**
 - Right click on the logical drive.
 - Click Disconnect.
 - Delete a network printer.

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In Windows Explorer, to share a folder, right click on it and then click “Share”. Specify the share’s name and who will be granted access to it (normally everyone). To share a printer, go to the “Printers and Faxes” applet, right click on the printer and click “Share”. Give the printer share a name.

In Windows Explorer or in My Computer, to connect a logical drive to a share on another PC, click the Tools menu, then Map. Choose a free drive letter and then type in or browse to the desired Share. The syntax is \\<pc name>\<share name>. To add a network printer, go to the “printers and Faxes” applet and click “add printer”. Indicate the desired printer is a network printer. Type in or browse to the desired network shared printer. The syntax is: \\<pc name>\<printer name>. Note – a network print server is also accessed in this way; to Windows, it looks like a PC with a shared printer.

To disconnect from a shared folder, go to My Computer, right click on the drive letter, and the click “disconnect”.

To detach from a network printer, go to the ‘Printers and Faxes’ applet, right click on the printer and then click Delete.

Open Workshop / Q and A

**Your Networking
Problems and Questions**

**Basic Home Networking
Wired and Wireless**