

Downtown Norfolk Council

Setting up a Wireless Network within your office/business

It is relatively inexpensive to set up a wireless network for your office or business. For a one-time investment of approximately \$600 and a monthly cost of no more than \$50, you can purchase all the equipment, software and bandwidth needed to support a standalone wireless network system which should, theoretically, cover a 5,000 square foot facility capable of supporting several dozen users.

Equipment needed

- **Personal Computer:** An average personal computer should be adequate to support a small wireless network. If you are investing in a new system, you can purchase a perfectly acceptable personal computer for about \$500. The minimum specifications include a current generation processor (e.g., Intel Pentium or AMD Athlon) with rated speed at 1.6 GHz or better with at least 1GB of DDR 2 memory. Although you could use an existing computer to support a wireless network, it would probably be best to have one solely dedicated to the service to insure your business systems aren't placed at risk by sharing equipment with a public network.
- **Router:** Select an 802.11g wireless router to supply more network bandwidth than prior models. It will permit faster file sharing and printing while supporting more computers without slowing response times. Signal range should approach 300 feet. The cost should be between \$50 and \$100.
- **Software:** Your computer should come with standard operating software; and you should invest in an annual subscription to an Internet Security software suite like those sold by McAfee, Norton, or Kaspersky. PC Magazine rates Norton Internet Security 2008 as the best choice. Cost: \$50-\$80.

Broadband Access

To provide a connection to the Internet, it will be best to subscribe to a broadband service like those offered by Cox Cable, Verizon, Continental Broadband and dozens of others. Cost: \$30 to \$40 per month. Installation fees may be extra.

Installation

Most equipment and networks can be set up by an average computer user independently or with complimentary phone support from the broadband access provider and equipment manufacturer. However, if expertise is required, most equipment vendors can provide a recommended service which

should cost no more than \$200; and Best Buy and Circuit City provide comparable installation services through their Geek Squad and Firedog units.