



Home Networks

Why do I need a network at home?

More and more households now have broadband Internet access, and more than one PC or laptop. It can be extremely useful to link those machines via a network, to allow all the computers to share the Internet access. Children increasingly use the Internet for homework and research, and adults use the Internet for home shopping, online banking, bill payment, email, and working from home. A home network allows all the family to access the Internet at the same time. Networks are also useful to allow for file and printer sharing among all your computers. And for recreation, a home network allows you to play network games, and share music and video between all your computers.

Broadband

There are 2 different domestic broadband options in the UK – ADSL and cable. Both allow for much faster, “always on” Internet access. While the Internet providers do not always advertise this, or “support” it, all UK broadband connections can be shared, including for example, broadband connections through Sky, BT Broadband, Orange, AOL and Pipex, as well as Telewest Blueyonder and NTL cable broadband services.

Wireless networks

Where you do not want to install additional wiring in your premises, it may be appropriate to use a wireless network. This involves additional hardware for the wireless “access point” and wireless adapters for each of your PCs, laptops or Macs. Net Therapy will first visit your home for a free “site survey” to assess how well wireless will work in your home, and advise you of all the possible network options. Where wireless coverage is poor, it is possible to implement wireless repeaters that will increase the range of your wireless network.

Wired networks

While wireless networks may be suitable, they are not currently as fast, as secure or as stable as wired networks. Where a permanent network installation is required, data cables can be installed in your home.

Working from home

If you work from home, you may need access to your work email, or files from the network at your business. A VPN (virtual private network) allows you to securely connect to another network across the Internet. Or you may just want to access your work email.

Other ideas

- VoIP (Voice over IP), which allows you to make telephone calls across the Internet, is already becoming feasible. A home network enables you to use these new phones.
- Security. You can install wired and wireless security cameras in your home, to enable you to keep an eye on your home from anywhere in the world.
- Servers are not just for businesses. If you have a lot of files at home, whether it's documents or multimedia, your mp3 collection, or digital videos, they are much safer stored on a dedicated server. And if you have a home network, you can access the files on the server from anywhere. You can also use your broadband connection to create your own web server on the Internet, running from your own home!