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Are Wireless Networks Secure?

Unfortunately, no computer network is truly secure. A wireless network can support a range of up to 150 feet indoors and 300 feet outdoors. It's always theoretically possible for eavesdroppers to view or "snoop" the traffic on any network, and it's often possible to add or "inject" unwelcome traffic as well. However, some networks are built and managed much more securely than others. For both wired and wireless networks alike, the real question to answer becomes - is it secure *enough*? Overall wireless networks are now secure enough to use in the vast majority of homes, and many businesses. Security features like WEP and WPA can scramble or "encrypt" network traffic so that its contents cannot easily be deciphered by snoopers. Here are some sound rules to follow: Change the user name, password and network ID periodically, turn on the WEP or WPA encryption, turn off the network name broadcast, do not auto-connect to open Wi-Fi networks, enable firewalls on each computer and the router, and turn off the network during extended periods of non-use. The only truly secure network is the one never built!

Need More Hard Drive Storage?

Here are some facts on adding an additional drive to your computer. Let's compare a 500 gig hard drive. An external unit will run anywhere from \$100-150. You merely buy it and plug it in all on your own (as easy as plugging in a lamp). A the same internal drive will cost \$50-70. Now here's the hard part. If you need someone else to install it, plan on spending \$40 extra and don't forget the shop will probably keep your computer for three or more days. Another thing to remember is that if for some reason you want to remove this additional hard drive, you will have to pay someone to remove it. An external drive may be another piece of equipment setting near your computer but you can see how much simpler your life can be.

Next Issue: How to find a good repair location.

New Classes:

I will be teaching Word 2007 at The Eberly Center on the campus of UT starting February 17. This class will cover the basic skills needed to run the software. Excel 2007 will be next. Contact the center to secure your spot (419-530-8570). I will be teaching Computer Basics starting March 3 at this same location. I will also be teaching a Computer Basic class at Lourdes College (419-824-3707) starting March 12. I will be at MCCC (Bedford, MI 734-847-0559) Feb. 28. Check my website for details and register for my newsletter at www.ohcomputertraining.com.

Janis Weber, owner of Ohio Computer Training, is a personal computer tutor. Contact her to schedule personal tutoring. Need a website? I can set up and design this as well. E-mail questions or comments to jwpctutor@gmail.com. Contact her by phone at 419-885-4255.