# Wireless Networks Extend Broadband Internet Throughout The House

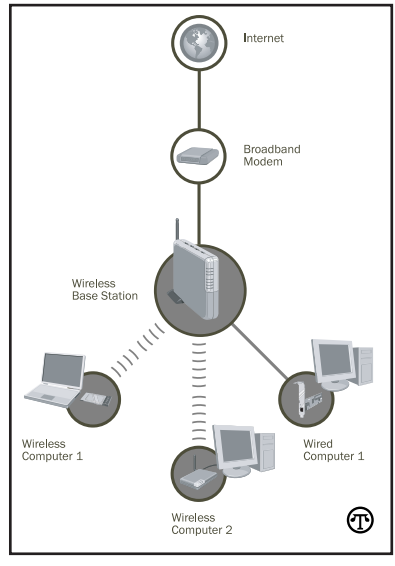
(NAPSA)—Not long ago, more than one personal computer in the home would have seemed unnecessary, unless you were a technology geek. But today two- and three-computer households are becoming increasingly common as more people start to telecommute, more kids get computers in their rooms to do schoolwork, and the Internet becomes a mainstream resource for news and entertainment.

Among the estimated 14 million U.S. households with high-speed Internet connections as of the middle of 2002, nearly 60 percent, or roughly 8 million homes, have more than one PC. More than a quarter, almost 4 million, have three or more computers, according to Joe Laszlo, technology analyst with Jupiter Research, a division of Jupitermedia Corp.

But multiple computers require multiple connections to the Internet, multiple printers and scanners, and tons of unsightly wires, right? Not for the growing number of families that are creating wireless networks in their homes.

Wireless networks connect multiple computers in different parts of a house with a specialized technology called 802.11b or Wi-Fi (short for wireless fidelity). These networks allow each computer to share a single broadband Internet connection without the need to drill holes in walls or floorboards to connect the PCs. This technology also enables users to share their files and printers among their computers and browse the Internet while they roam around their home—on the deck or out to the backyard, for example—with their laptop computer.

Although wireless networking technologies have been around for several years, the technology has been too complicated for the average computer user to easily set up and maintain. "Until recently, you had to have a technology degree to set up a wireless network. This was understandably intimidating to a lot of people," said Todd Greenberg, product manager for Broadband Networking at Microsoft Corp. "The key to providing the benefits of a wireless network to all PC users is to make these networks simple enough for anyone to set up and use."




**All the computers in your house can reach the Internet through one wireless base station.**

Greenberg points to a new line of wireless networking products from Microsoft as a prime example of making wireless networks easier to configure. The base station (sometimes called a "router") broadcasts the Internet signal from the broadband modem to other computers in the home. To receive the signal, each computer needs a wireless adapter. According to Greenberg, the smart software "takes the work out of networking" by automatically detecting system settings and then configuring the base station and other computers on the network. In addition, Microsoft's Broadband Networking products automatically set up a form of wireless security called 128-bit WEP to help keep the network safe from intruders.

Once up and running, the network can extend the Internet to all the computers in the home, which will keep even the technology geeks happy.