

# Securing your home Wi-Fi network from hackers and prowlers

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MarketWatch



June 27, 2005

Increasingly, people are installing wireless, or "Wi-Fi," networks in their homes for the convenience of remote access to the Internet.

Prices are falling rapidly for wireless access points and wireless routers, which enable you to connect remotely with the Internet. Also, most late-model laptops come with Wi-Fi capability built in. Finally, most people would rather not have to run new network cables in their homes so that multiple computers can access the Internet.

But now more than ever, it's important to make sure that the information stored in your computer is secure. The "Wired Equivalence Protocol" (WEP) security feature provided on early wireless devices already has been compromised. Newer wireless devices are certified by the Wi-Fi Alliance, a nonprofit industry standards group, and they use security protocols called WPA or WPA2.

For an easier and faster setup, most people would rather "plug and play" than use the security features on their wireless networks. Wi-Fi products usually have their security turned off by default so that users can get them up and running with little fuss. They may not even have a password required for administration of the network.

If you have financial information stored in your computer or if you use online banking and money management tools, not securing your Wi-Fi leaves your network wide open to computer hackers. They can easily connect directly to your network and capture account names, numbers and passwords, or penetrate the computers connected to your network.

Here are tips to help ensure that your Wi-Fi network is secure:

Buy equipment that provides WPA or WPA2 security capability. Older equipment may be upgradeable to WPA, so check your manufacturer's Web site.

Always have the security features on your network enabled and configured properly.

Change the admin password, and block or change your network name.

Use MAC address filtering if your network equipment supports it.

Install and enable firewalls.

For more tips and information, go to [www.wi-fi.org](http://www.wi-fi.org).

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