

What Kind of Network is Right for Me?

Basically for this discussion, there are two kinds of networks, wired and wireless. The most basic difference is that wired networks communicate through data cables, while wireless networks communicate through radio signals.

Wired networks have been around for decades. By far the most common wired networking technology found today is known as Ethernet. The data cables, known as Ethernet network cables or Cat 5 cables, connect the computers and other devices that make up the network. Wireless networks are relatively new. They don't use cables for connections; instead, they use radio waves, like cordless phones to transfer data.

Why choose a wireless network?

- Freedom to work from anywhere within range of the network
- Quick installation
- No cables to buy
- Save cabling time and hassle
- Easy to expand

Wireless networks are rapidly becoming more popular and coming down in price. Since they don't require cables, you can use the devices anywhere in an office or home, even out on the patio. There's no need to roll out an Ethernet network cable to each computer you want to connect; you can network anywhere without wires. For convenience, wireless networking is the answer.

Why choose a wired network?

- Lower cost
- Faster speed—up to 1000Mbps
- Longer possible range
- More secure

Wired networks have been around for years. They use the most affordable products and provide the fastest speeds of transmission. The distance between devices, such as computers, on a network is also much less restricted in wired networking up to 300 feet with Cat 5 Ethernet cables or 1,800 feet using fiber optics. Wired networks are the most secure, since your information never leaves the security of the cabling you don't have to be concerned like wireless networking about the security of the network. Another good reason to have a wired is if you need to move large amounts of data at high speeds, such as professional-quality multimedia, wired networking is the most efficient way to do it.