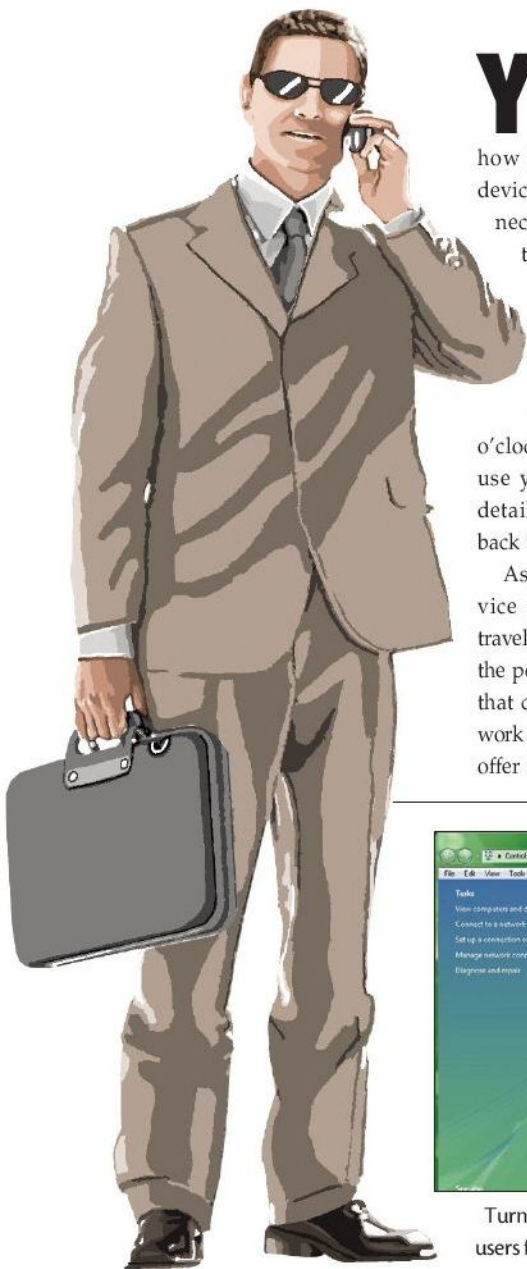


Wi-Fi For Mobile Professionals Get Wireless-Ready



You've undoubtedly realized throughout your many business travels how important your mobile device can be for staying connected and staying productive on the go. Not only can you connect to a Wi-Fi network with your smartphone to look up directions to the location of your three o'clock meeting, you can also use your notebook to create detailed trip reports to email back to the office.

As you use your mobile device more and more during travel, it's important to consider the potential risks or difficulties that connecting to a Wi-Fi network can pose. In this article, we offer several tips that will help

you ensure your smartphone or notebook stays secure, troubleshoot wireless connection issues, and preserve your mobile device's battery life.

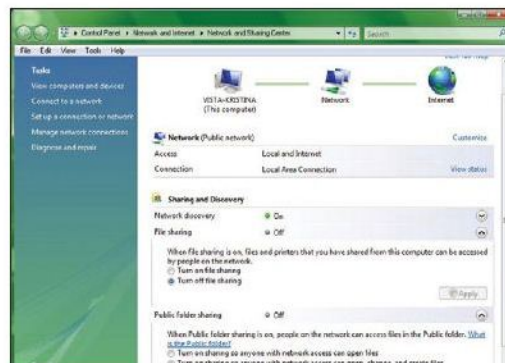
Safety First

Whether you're in the airport, hotel, or out for a cup of coffee, chances are there's a free Wi-Fi hotspot nearby. Most of the time, the wireless networks you connect to aren't likely to pose a threat, but just in case, you should always take the necessary steps to protect your mobile device from hackers, viruses, and malicious software.

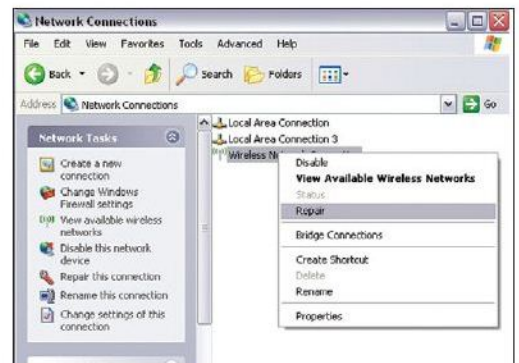
It may seem like common sense, but the first step to protecting your mobile device is to ensure you're connecting to a reliable, secured network. Take

time to learn about the wireless network being offered by the establishment you're visiting. Ask an employee or manager to confirm the SSID (Service Set Identifier), or name of the network, and to supply the password, if one is required.

Also be aware of the type of information you're sending over the network, such as passwords or credit card information, which malicious users may try to intercept. If you are logging into accounts that require you to enter personal information, wait until you are using a reliable Internet connection. If your company uses a VPN (virtual private network) to remotely communicate with the office, you should log in to the VPN client so that any sensitive



Turn off file sharing to prevent unauthorized users from accessing the data on your hard drive.



By using the Repair function, Windows can sometimes correct connection problems automatically.

information you send will be automatically encrypted.

Another way to protect your personal or company data is to turn off file sharing whenever you're connected to a public network. That way, other users won't be able to view the files on your hard drive. To turn off file sharing on notebooks running Windows XP, navigate to the shared folder and choose Sharing and Security. Under the Security tab, click the Do Not Share This Folder radio button. In Windows Vista, click the Start button, right-click Network, then choose Properties. In the Sharing and Discovery section, locate File Sharing, click the corresponding down arrow, and select Turn Off File Sharing. Then, use the drop-down arrow next to Public Folder Sharing to select Turn Off Sharing.

Get Connected

It's not easy to stay productive while traveling if you're having trouble connecting to a wireless network. With any luck, you won't have any wireless troubles on your next trip, but just in case, use these suggestions to help work through connection issues.

If you have trouble connecting, first check to make sure your smartphone or notebook's internal wireless card is switched on. For notebooks, check the connection icon in the System Tray. If there is a red X over the icon, your wireless card is turned off or not connected to a network.

You can also check the status of your network connection in WinXP by clicking Start, Control Panel, and Network Connections. In Vista, go to the Control Panel, click Network And Internet, and select Manage Network Connections. The next screen will list all of the networks

available to you, including any wireless connections. From here, you can right-click the wireless connection and choose Repair (in WinXP) or Diagnose (in Vista). Windows will attempt to find the problem and offer solutions on how to fix it.

Depending on where your travels take you, the network you're trying to connect to might be anonymous, meaning the service provider, such as a hotel or restaurant, has hidden the SSID. In this case, you'll have to manually enter the network's name in addition to the password. To do this in WinXP, click Start, Connect To, and Wireless Network Connection. Next, click Change Advanced Settings on the left to launch the Wireless Network Connection Properties window. Click Add and then enter the network's SSID and password. In Vista, you can do this by going to the Control Panel, choosing Network And Internet, and then selecting Manage Wireless Networks. Click Add and then Manually Create A Network Profile.

Extend Battery Life

The last thing you need on a hectic business trip is for the battery in your smartphone or



Disabling your wireless card helps preserve your mobile device's battery life, so you can keep working for longer.

notebook to die. One way to help preserve battery life is to turn off your device's internal wireless card so it won't use power searching for an available network. Many notebooks have a switch to turn the wireless card on and off. Other wireless cards will have to be disabled in the Device Manager. To access the Device Manager in WinXP, click Start, Control Panel, and choose View System Information; under the Hardware tab, click Device Manager. In Vista,

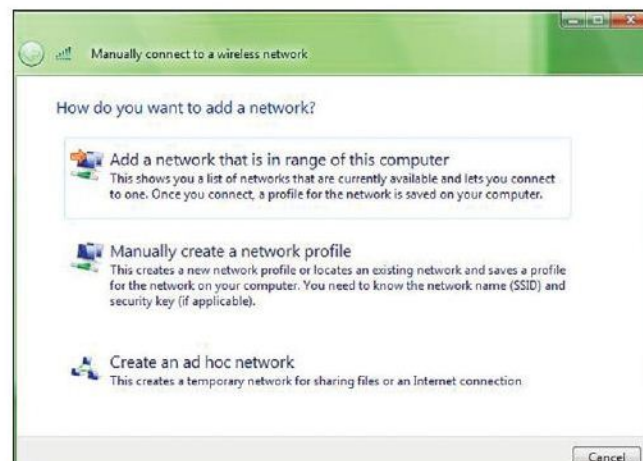
access the Control Panel and select Hardware And Sound and then Device Manager. Locate your wireless card in the Device Manager window, right-click it, and select Disable.

Turning off the wireless function in your smartphone is usually as simple as accessing the phone's settings, choosing the wireless feature, and choosing the option to turn it off. If necessary, use your model's manual to identify the location of the phone's wireless settings.

Have A Safe Trip

With a little precaution and know-how, you can easily connect to wireless networks while you're traveling, and do so safely. For additional information about keeping safe while using public Wi-Fi, visit www.pctoday.com, click the Business Travel 911 link on the left, and look for links to the "Use Wi-Fi Hotspots Wisely" and "Solve Wireless Internet Connection Problems" articles; both are listed under the Remote Connections heading.

by Kris Glaser Brambila



Some establishments hide their SSIDs as an extra safety measure, so you'll have to enter it manually.