

Copper Makes for Faster Home Networks

More and more computers are talking with each other – and it's a good thing, because more than 160 million Americans belong to households with access to the Internet.

Many of these homes have more than one computer. Many have a computer, a printer or an Internet connection that several family members want to access at the same time. In today's world, it's important that our computers and devices can talk with each other.

When first installed, home networks typically are just used to share Internet access, but owners quickly discover that networks can also be used to share computing power, disk space, printers, photos, music and more. Home networking allows Jenny to research her science report online and send a copy to her older brother for a quick check, while Dad cuts a CD-ROM for tomorrow's sales presentation and Johnny chats online with his classmates. Meanwhile, Mom can print out digital photographs from the last family outing and e-mail them to Aunt Rose.

Computers are today's hand-me-downs. Typically, when the family buys a new computer, the older models go to the younger children or are adapted to some specific task. The best computer becomes the master computer or server. It is ideal for storing files the whole family wants to access.

Actually, computers can be easily configured so anyone can access any file on any computer – or not – depending on the security needs of different members of the family.

The hardware for creating home networks has plunged in price, and the installation software has become easy to

use. You don't have to be a network engineer to network your home anymore.

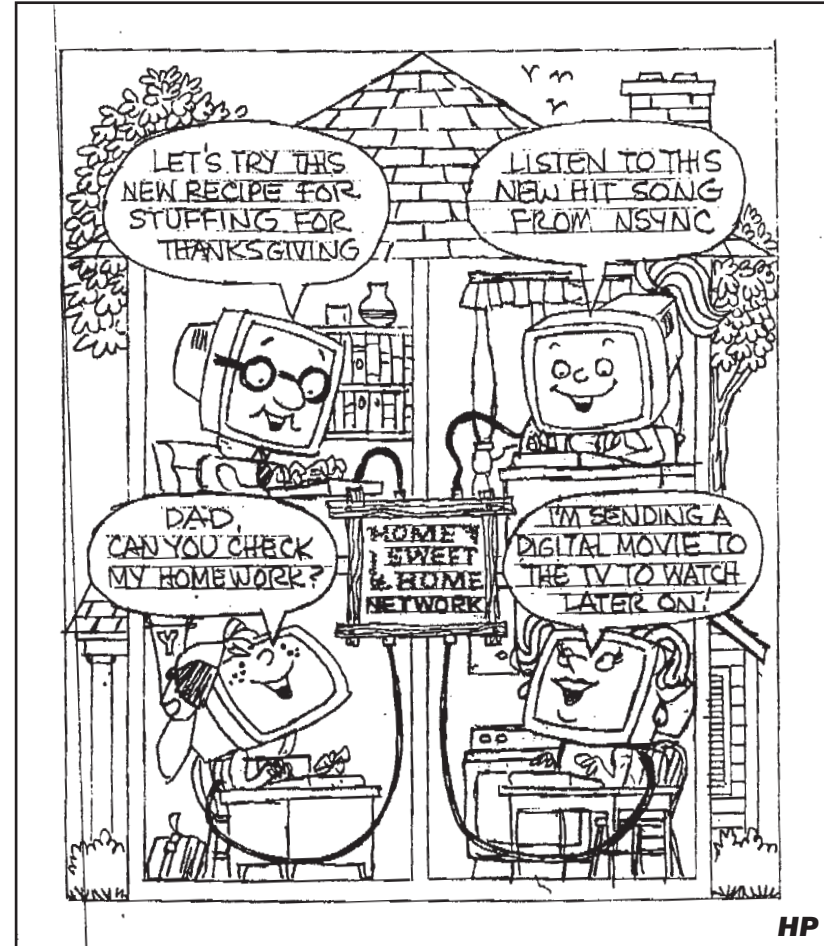
Copper Is the Key

Most people don't realize just how fast copper wire can move information between computers. Copper is the workhorse in office buildings. Yet the distances or "runs" for copper wiring are typically much shorter in homes than office buildings. Over these short distances copper wires easily and reliably can carry information at high enough speeds to satisfy even certified information gluttons.

Once you are networked, countless toys can be added throughout the home to enhance your life. And by upgrading the communications wiring, you are making an investment in the equity of your home. The resale value of a house can increase substantially when modernized for home networking. In fact, many experts believe that in the near future homebuyers will turn down homes that are not equipped with structured wiring.

An increasing percentage of new homes today are being built with Category 5e wiring throughout, providing information outlets in all bedrooms, studies, kitchens and even in bathrooms. This wiring is installed in a "star" configuration with separate lines running to each room from a central location.

Like most wiring, Cat 5e is best installed when the home is still under construction but it is not as hard as you might think to retrofit an older home. If you are a computing family, you should consider rewiring your home as an investment in the present as well as the future. You will enjoy your home much



more, as possibilities for sharing music, data and video open up to you.

For most homeowners, retrofitting an older home usually requires a qualified communications wiring specialist. Special tools are used to run wires without damage to the walls and floors. To

help you find the right installer and get the best possible installation for your needs, the Copper Development Association has developed a list of questions you should ask yourself as well as your contractor. To see it, visit <http://telecom.copper.org>. **HP**