

## January, 2015 Issue #2 - Wireless Router Settings

Recently, a good friend and frequent reader of this newsletter (who shall remain nameless) discovered an unsettling fact: his wireless router signal was not password-protected. While it may not seem like a big deal, this is not something you want to leave unprotected. It is like leaving the front door of your house wide open.

**Most wireless routers made prior to 2012 all have the same flaw:** they come with default settings that are essentially wide open – meaning that they have default passwords, or no password at all. If you were to take the wireless router out of the box, plug it in and start using it without changing any settings, you would be leaving a very large security gap. Anyone within the reach of the signal could “camp on” to your wireless signal. Worse, they could also use your wireless to send out spams, viruses, or attack your computer.

Don't become the “poster boy” or “poster girl” for leaving yourself open to hacking or wireless signal squatters. Your router maker will have a website with instructions how to set it up. Some even sent a configuration CD with the router. If you can't find the CD, your router maker's website likely has a download copy you can use. Once you have the instructions or the install CD, you will be confronted with many choices how to set the wireless signal. Here are some definitions and guidelines on how to set your wireless signal:

**SSID:** this is commonly known as the “wireless name”.

You can make this wireless name anything you want, I recommend something obscure. Why advertise who you are? Making it a nonsensical name makes it hard to guess who's who.

**Security Type:** there are four main types:

WEP: don't use this one. If WEP is the only type on your wireless router, time to get a new one.

WPA-Personal [or] WPA-PSK: Better than WEP, but not great.

WPA2-Personal [or] WPA2-PSK: The current “best” for home use

WPA2-Business [or] RADIUS: both are used for business grade wireless, not usable at home.

**Encryption Type:** there are two types to use:

TKIP: the original standard, it is effective, but not efficient, somewhat slow.

AES: a better standard and more efficient than TKIP, allows higher Wireless speeds.

**Select a wireless Password:** Like your computer password, this should be hard to guess.

I recommend making it at least 8 characters long, Upper/Lower case, and mix in some numbers.

**2.4Ghz and 5.0Ghz:** if your wireless router can broadcast in both frequencies – great, set both signals to the same name, but add a “5G” to the end of the 5.0Ghz name to distinguish which is which.

**Guest Option:** if your wireless router has the ability to add a Guest Access SSID, also great! Set it up the same as your main signal, but add “GUEST” to the name to distinguish it from your main signal. Also make the password different from your main signal.

**Wireless Isolation:** if this is an option for your Guest Wireless, make sure it is enabled. This keeps your guests from snooping on each other's computers in the Guest network.

If you have any questions, I am waiting for your call...!

-John Becker