

Wireless media revolution

Merging media lets you create a seamless home information network

IT'S NO SURPRISE our computers have become a hub for all things entertainment, be it music, TV, feature films, home movies, video games, radio or digital photos.

After all, a hard drive can store vast amounts of media, and the Internet is a wonderfully convenient way to get music and movies from cyberspace to your space.

But let's face it: Your den or home office probably isn't the most comfortable place to enjoy all this. No one wants to show off new photos of the kids on a small PC monitor. And why listen to music on teeny speakers when you've invested in a home theatre in the other room?

Thankfully, a few clever products let you access all of your PC-based media—such as music, photos, videos and Internet radio stations—from the comfort of your La-Z-Boy in the family room. So long as you have a wireless (“Wi-Fi”) network in your home, a very popular and inexpensive trend among Canadians, you can stream all of this wonderful content from your PC to your TV.

For example, the D-Link Wireless Media Player (DSM-320; www.dlink.ca) can be connected to your television and will enable you to wirelessly call up all



A wireless media player lets you stream content from your PC to your TV.



Marc Saltzman, a leading high-tech reporter, contributes to more than three dozen prominent publications, appears on radio and TV, and is the author of 13 books.

of the music, pictures and videos stored on a computer's hard drive in another room. It can also be used to stream select Internet radio stations and services to your home theatre.

If your high-speed modem is in the same room as your TV, or if you don't own a wireless router, you may choose to connect these products with the optional wired Ethernet port (which looks like a fat telephone jack).

Similarly, Microsoft's Xbox 360 video game console (www.xbox.ca) can also wirelessly accept content from your PC, as this Wi-Fi-ready machine has a built-in Media Center Extender feature (www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/mediacenter). The Xbox 360 can wirelessly access all of your PC's media, including any recorded TV shows stored on the computer's hard drive, as many of these PCs come with a TV tuner card.

Wi-Fi truly lets you connect—and have the best of—all worlds. [E]

The Costco Connection

Members will find a variety of Wi-Fi items, such as wireless routers and adapters for PCs and notebooks, at their local Costco and on costco.ca.

Ask Marc Saltzman

Q: I want to purchase a BlackBerry for business, but don't like the wide form factor. What do you recommend?

Sean R.
Vancouver, BC

A: There's good news for you, Sean. Research in Motion does have a BlackBerry that looks and feels more like a cell phone. It's the BlackBerry 7130e, and it offers many of the features found in its siblings, such as push e-mail, phone, organizer, Bluetooth support (for wireless headsets) and a speakerphone.

In order to maintain its svelte shape, however, the BlackBerry 7130e features a SureType keyboard that fuses a traditional alphanumeric phone keypad with a QWERTY keyboard. While it takes some getting used to, SureType helps you compose messages by completing your words for you as you begin typing them (and spell-checking at the same time!).

Question for Marc?
Send your technology and computer questions to:

Q&A with Marc Saltzman
The Costco Connection
415 West Hunt Club Road
Ottawa, ON K2E 1C5
Or fax to (613) 221-2283
or e-mail to
connection@costco.com

Please include
“Marc Saltzman Q&A”
in the subject line.
Marc will answer selected questions in his column.
He regrets that unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.