

# UNPLUGGED

With

## Starwire Technologies

Welcome to Unplugged – a monthly column dedicated to helping educate you on topics about the Internet and other technologies you use everyday. Starwire Technologies is a local high-speed Internet provider located in Burnett County.

This month you will learn what wireless networks are, how they work, and tips to keep you safe when using one.

Wireless networks, also known as Wi-Fi, are a very popular technology used for connecting computers together without the need and hassle of running wires. Almost every laptop sold today includes wireless capabilities, and adaptors are also sold to allow you to add the functionality to older computers. The most common configuration includes an Access Point or Wireless Router, which is the device responsible for broadcasting the signal that the computers can connect to.

One of the most popular benefits of a wireless network is the freedom of using an Internet connection anywhere in your house. This allows you to visit web sites, check email, and do many other tasks while you relax on the couch or the front porch. Many restaurants and coffee shops provide a wireless network so their customers can bring a laptop with them and get online while enjoying their food or beverage. Many other businesses use them simply because they need computers in unusual places or the building wasn't wired for a network and it can cost too much to run new wires inside of all the walls.

There are many places where you will receive signals from multiple networks at the same time, so each wireless network has a name, allowing you to know which network you are connecting to. Some networks broadcast as an "open network" which also means it doesn't provide security, allowing other people to connect and use your network without your permission. To solve this problem, virtually every wireless device supports a security method called WPA. By using a long password that isn't easy to guess and has random characters in it, intruders will be kept out and you can feel confident that your private information is safe!

Feel free to contact us for more information about this topic, to suggest a future topic, or to inquire about our services. Thanks for reading and stay tuned for the next edition of **Unplugged!**



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