# Why Do I Need a Router

By: Lauren Bove

The days of plugging in your computer and dialing up for an Internet connection are long gone, thankfully. These days, accessing the Internet is a breeze thanks to companies that provide high-speed connections. The downside to this connection is now your computer and home network have an open door to the outside world, and whoever wants access can have it. If you're wondering, "Why do I need a router?" keep reading.

**What is a router?**

A router is a piece of computer hardware that is connected between your high-speed Internet, such as a DSL or cable modem, and all of your Internet devices—computers, HDTV, iPod, iPad and more. The router splits the incoming high-speed Internet signal between these devices, according to PC World.

**Why do I need a router?**

Everyone that uses the Internet will appreciate the features of a router. While it can be off-putting trying to keep up with all the technology advances and changes, the addition of a router is one advance for the home user that you should consider seriously. Some of the advantages of a router include:

- Routers allow your home's computers to share a cable, DSL or satellite Internet connection.

- Routers have safe surf filtering options that can stop anyone on your network from accessing inappropriate web sites. This is a must-have feature if you are a parent or there are kids in the home.

- If your computer is connected to the Internet in any way, you are opening it up for viruses, worms and broadband thieves and you are subject to virtual intrusions. Everyone will benefit from router's security features.

- Routers free up the computer from some of the burden of running your in home network. This ends up improving your computer's performance, as there is more room for applications to run and run well.

- Many routers allow for advanced security, as in virtual private networking, or VPN. This feature allows users to safely log in to their businesses from home.

- Most routers include firewalls, which offer a sturdy defense from anyone wishing to hack their way into your computers.

- Most wireless routers encrypt your wireless data. The encryption is constantly being upgraded, as the codes are being broken by particularly diligent hackers. From software upgrades to hardware upgrades, routers will keep improving encryption as needed.

- Routers also keep track of network usage. Alerts can be set up to email you should something out of the ordinary happen.

**Working with a router**

You no longer need your own IT wizard to install, configure and use a router successfully. While routers do add a degree of complexity to your home computer network, they are becoming more and more user-friendly. Router companies are making the router installation and maintenance process almost plug and play, with newly created user tools. From smart wizards to simple install assistants and installation guides, router configuration is so much easier than it once was. For a simple home router, it should take you no more than a half hour to set your router up and begin surfing the Internet with ease.