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Rx for better Wi-Fi at home

Written by Nate Herring - Hubbell Inc. on October 19, 2020



Zoom call problems? Here's what to do!

In this socially distanced world that we live in, optimizing safety and health by staying at home as much as possible is a wise choice for many people. Nevertheless, the ability to continue to work effectively is critical to keeping business (and careers) moving forward in this challenging environment. In large part, that means access to convenient and dependable Wi-Fi connectivity—having internet that is reliable enough for basics such as email, research and collaborating and also is robust enough to allow participation in activities that demand higher connection quality such as real time video meeting streaming applications like Teams, Zoom and Skype. However, thousands and thousands of people are creating new ad hoc home offices wherever they can find the space. And the space they can find is not always close to the Wi-Fi router—in fact, for many people the router was originally installed in the basement or lowest point in the house squirreled away with the water heater and other utilities, and people are often needing to outfit attics or spare bedrooms or other areas that may be hundreds of feet away. And none of that is conducive to Wi-Fi reliability.

Further, with so many people stuck in the house for long hours, office or no office, finding a quiet place to video chat is also becoming more challenging than ever. And when you find one, it better be close to the router or you're going to get "low bandwidth" warnings. Want to get out and enjoy the nice weather? Better not get more than a few steps out from the door, or you may have the same problem.

Perhaps most challenging of all, today's Wi-Fi networks are not always built for the increase in traffic we're seeing. If your kids are each logging in to their virtual classrooms, your spouse is on a business VOIP call and it's imperative that you get in on an 11:00 Zoom call with your boss and your team, it's quite possible that you might experience garbled or pixilated sound and video, lags, latency, interference, out of sync audio and video, frozen picture, or drop the connection all together. And that's not good.

Lastly, the gamers in your house are probably the ones who tend to be most infuriated by laggy internet—and probably most vocal about it! And for them, the situation is just getting worse and worse in the current environment!

Pre-packaged, all-in-one wiring solution kit

Dealing with occasional annoying Wi-Fi issues is definitely a pre-COVID cliché of modern life, but, like the weather, they have tended to be something that everyone complains about but nobody does anything about. However, with the demand-driven increase in issues and their urgency, Wi-Fi reliability problems have now become front and center and many homeowners are getting off the fence and realizing that *now* is the time to do something about it. For those people—and there are many of us!—Hubbell has created a vital and convenient tool—two actually. Hubbell's prepackaged "Work From Home Connectivity Kits" are single-SKU all-in-one wiring solutions that allow low-voltage contractors, electricians or even DIY homeowners themselves to either set up direct hardwired links or move wireless access points closer to the end device for improved speed and reliability. It also makes it easy for, say, a company or department to send kits out to all team members en masse to help put them all in good stead for meetings and remote work responsibilities.

While none of these components are new, they have never before been packaged together in a single kit that gives installers and distributors everything needed to quickly and easily solve this particular common, vexing problem, while alleviating guesswork and the need to separately specify upwards of a dozen or more individual products. The kits include 150ft lengths of cable, jacks, wall-plates, patch cords and all the other components needed for an easy, permanent solution. Just add a one-time installation and you're ready to build in fast, easy and cost-effective robust Wi-Fi infrastructure into any home.

Two effective choices

The kits come in two flavors. One provides wiring to go through the walls with an ethernet cable connecting the router to an extender or other access point placed elsewhere in the house, such as from the basement to the attic, potentially bringing Wi-Fi closer to every user to improve performance. Even more robust is the second solution, which entails running cable strategically throughout the house, and providing actual Ethernet jacks wherever devices are used, creating super-reliable hardwired plug-in connectivity. The schematic below should illustrate this even better for you.

Not many people realize that wireless can only either transmit or receive data at one time—that means if someone is downloading or uploading a large file, or streaming a movie, it can increase lag issues throughout the house. Wired Ethernet connections, on the other hand, can send and receive simultaneously in full duplex, so the reduction in lag time with directly plugged in devices can be quite significant.

No matter which option you choose, both are permanent, one time, effective, affordable infrastructure solutions that will not only improve network connectivity from day one and every day forward, but will probably end up being a selling point when you sell your home—most likely easily recouping the modest cost several-fold. After all, who doesn't want better Wi-Fi connectivity?

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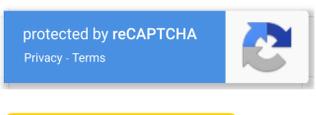
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