

Re: Networking 2 computers

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- *From:* Malke <notreally@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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The Golfer's Wife wrote:

I have a new notebook and an existing computer. The computer runs on XP, the notebook on Vista. I am on ADSL and I now have a new 4-port Belkin ADSL 2+ modem and all the hardware is working ok. I am trying to network the two computers so that I can share files (only in case of a breakdown in either one). I have the printer software installed on both and it prints on either computer (depending which is hooked to an ISB port). I am very happy with all of this.

I have given the same name to both network names and HOME as the generic name. But the network won't work. Is there something else I should do?

Standard network troubleshooting. Not everything may be applicable to you:

This link will take you through Vista networking very well:

http://www.microsoft.com/technet/network/evaluate/vista_fp.msp

Problems sharing files between computers on a network are generally caused by 1) a misconfigured firewall; or 2) inadvertently running two firewalls such as the built-in Windows Firewall and a third-party firewall; and/or 3) not having identical user accounts and passwords on all Workgroup machines; 4) trying to create shares where the operating system does not permit it.

Here are some general networking tips for home/small networks:

1. Configure firewalls on all machines to allow the Local Area Network (LAN) traffic as trusted. With Windows Firewall, this means allowing File/Printer Sharing on the Exceptions tab. Normally running the Network Setup Wizard on XP will take care of this for those machines. The only "gotcha" is that this will turn on the XPSP2 Windows Firewall. If you aren't running a third-party firewall or have an antivirus with "Internet Worm Protection" (like Norton 2006/07) which acts as a firewall, then you're fine. With third-party firewalls, I usually configure the LAN allowance with an IP range. Ex. would be 192.168.1.0-192.168.1.254. Obviously you would substitute your correct subnet. Do not run more than one firewall.
2. With earlier Microsoft operating systems, the name of the Workgroup didn't matter. Apparently it does with Vista, so put all computers in the same Workgroup. This is done from the System applet in Control Panel,

Re: Networking 2 computers

Computer Name tab.

3. Create identical user accounts and passwords on all machines. If you wish a machine to boot directly to the Desktop (into one particular user's account) for convenience, you can do this. The instructions at this link work for both XP and Vista:

Configure Windows to Automatically Login (MVP Ramesh) – <http://windowsxp.mvps.org/Autologon.htm>

4. If one or more of the computers is XP Pro or Media Center:

a. If you need Pro's ability to set fine-grained permissions, turn off Simple File Sharing (Folder Options>View tab) and create identical user accounts/passwords on all computers.

b. If you don't care about using Pro's advanced features, leave the Simple File Sharing enabled.

Simple File Sharing means that Guest (network) is enabled. This means that anyone without a user account on the target system can use its resources. This is a security hole but only you can decide if it matters in your situation.

I think it is a good idea to create the identical user accounts/passwords in any case when Vista machines are involved and it isn't an onerous task with home/small networks.

5. Create shares as desired. XP Home does not permit sharing of users' home directories (My Documents) or Program Files, but you can share folders inside those directories. A better choice is to simply use the Shared Documents folder. See the first link above for details about Vista sharing.

Malke

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