

Something strange happened to network setup on XP Pro machine

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- *From:* Andrey Tarasevich <andreytarasevich@xxxxxxxxxxx>
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Hello

I observe a rather strange loss of network functionality on my XP Pro machine. Maybe someone can help me to figure out what happened.

I have the following setup: two XP Pro machines (desktop and laptop) are connected by wires to a Linksys WRT54GS router at 192.168.1.1, which is in turn connected to a RCA/Thomson cable modem for Internet access. The desktop is configured with static IP (192.168.1.2 and 192.168.1.1 is specified as its default gateway), while the laptop obtains its address dynamically from the router (normally it gets 192.168.1.4). Everything was working perfectly for several years.

Last night something happened. In the morning I discovered that neither machine can access Internet, even though the modem's and router's lights seem to indicate that everything is fine. I rebooted all devices, which restored the Internet access for the laptop, but the desktop still refused to go online. The interesting part here is that the desktop can perfectly fine ping the laptop and access the laptop's shares, it has no problems accessing the internal setup pages of the router (192.168.1.1), it can also access the internal status pages of the cable modem (192.168.100.1) without any problems, but it cannot resolve URLs and it cannot ping/go to external IP addresses, even if they are specified explicitly.

To figure out what's happening, I decided to try connecting the machines to the modem directly (eliminate the router). Not surprisingly, there was no problem with the laptop. In order to connect the desktop I had to set its TCP/IP to automatic configuration. I connected the machine directly to the modem and rebooted everything. The desktop got stuck in "Acquiring network address" mode forever. 'ipconfig' would report '0.0.0.0' and there was no Internet or LAN access, of course.

I connected everything back the way it was before (connected both machines to the router), still keeping the desktop in automatic TCP/IP config mode. After booting up the desktop, once again got stuck with "Acquiring network address" indefinitely. (Yes, the router's DHCP has enough dynamic IP addresses available).

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I reconfigured the desktop back to the static 192.168.1.2, rebooted it and everything went back to the way it was this morning. The desktop had no problem accessing LAN, including the internals of the router and the modem, but no WAN access. The laptop had stable WAN access.

As an additional experiment, I pulled out of the closet my previous router – Linksys BEFSR41 – and repeated all these steps with this router as well. I got exactly the same results. The desktop can't obtain a dynamic IP, can't access Internet, but works fine with LAN addresses when configured statically.

To take things even further, I disabled the desktop's integrated NIC and inserted a "standalone" PCI NIC. Makes no difference. The problem apparently in with the software config, not the hardware.

I tried switching cables, connectors, routers, everything. The problem seems to be with the TCP/IP setup of the desktop machine. I tried resetting winsock and TCP/IP settings using 'netch' – no effect at all.

I also noticed, that when I access the modems internal page (192.168.100.1) from the statically configured desktop, I can see it reflected in router's log under desktop's IP (192.168.1.2). Any attempts of WAN access from the desktop leave absolutely no trace in router's log. It looks like the desktop is not even trying to consider the router for Internet access.

Can anybody please suggest something? What could be the reason for this behavior?

Thank you,
Andrey

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