

Sound iCal advice

Mail read receipts

WiFi art thou?

Mac Help

Handy tips and readers' questions answered

By Rob Buckley

Better iCal alarms

tip All of iCal's alarms use the built-in alert sounds of OS X – which are short to avoid being annoying. However, you can add any AIFF sound clip to the available list of alerts, and then use it in iCal.

First, you'll need an AIFF sound file. If you don't have any, you can convert any unprotected iTunes-compatible sound file into an AIFF by setting iTunes' Import preference to AIFF and then using the Convert command in the Advanced menu. You can then copy the converted file to the Desktop by dragging it from the main iTunes window.

When you have your AIFF file, open up your Library (it's in your Home folder) and look for a folder called Sounds. If there isn't one, create it.

Drop your AIFF into the Sounds folder. It can be called anything you like, but it has to end in '.aiff' (all lower case). Now go into iCal, highlight an event and click on the info button. You can now create a 'Message with Sound' alarm. The pull-down list of sounds will include your AIFF.

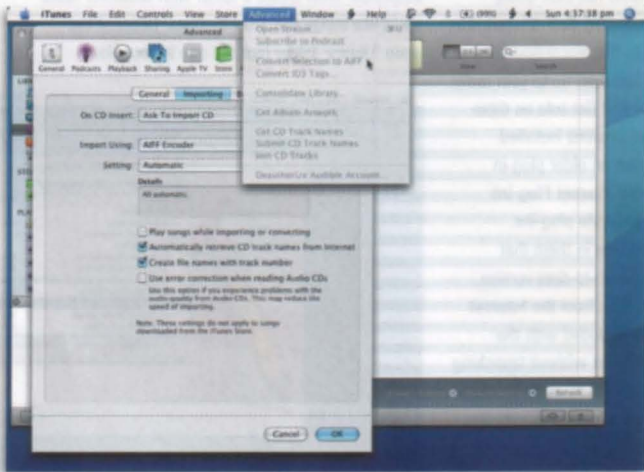
You can add more alarms to the event at diminishing intervals. Simply click on the Alarm label of the alarm you've just created to get the option to add another alarm.

What's your type?

Q I want to create a smart folder that finds documents created by a particular OS 9 application. With Sherlock in OS 9, you can drag a document to the empty creator code field and it will tell you what that was and look for documents that had that creator code, but I can't seem to do that on OS X. I have tried to Find by 'Kind' and after waiting five minutes for the list of applications and obscure plug-ins to re-order themselves during the search, I couldn't find the classic application listed anywhere.

Diana Walker

A OS 9 applications don't tend to register themselves with OS X very well, so it's not surprising that your OS 9 application isn't showing up in Spotlight. Fortunately, you can get round this problem. Although OS 9 didn't rely on file extensions as much as OS X did, if your OS 9 application used file extensions, you can use a Find configured to search for 'Name ends with' and then the file extension.



Alarm call You can convert any unprotected sound file into an AIFF using iTunes

This is probably the quickest type of search possible, so it is the best one to use.

However, life isn't always that kind, so it's likely your old application didn't use extensions. OS X may downplay file creator and document types, but it can still use them. To access them, instead of using the 'Kind' function, scroll down the menu and select 'Other...'. You'll be given a list of possible search attributes, and there are many to choose from, but for this instance select 'Creator'. There are two, so pick the one described as 'Application used to create the document', adding it to your 'favorites' if you'd like it appear in the search menu by default. Configure the other menus to give you a search of 'Creator is' and then insert the creator code you obtained from Sherlock.

Make your mark with audio books

tip If you have an audio book, odds are you'd like it to appear in the Audiobooks menu of both iTunes and your iPod. Not only will it be easier to locate when you want to listen to it, it'll be bookmarkable and you'll be able to change its play speed. However, unless it came in Audible format, your audio book just won't show up there, no matter how many times you change its genre or other metadata.

That's because iTunes needs it to have a special file format. First, download and install the 'Make Bookmarkable' AppleScript available from <http://dougscripts.com/itunes/scripts/scripts07.php?page=1#jointogether>. Now convert the audio book into AAC format, if it isn't already, using the Convert option in the Advanced menu (if it doesn't offer AAC as the format, change your import preferences

accordingly). Then select the converted file and run the AppleScript, which will convert the file in an .m4b file, give it the right file type and delete and re-import it into iTunes.

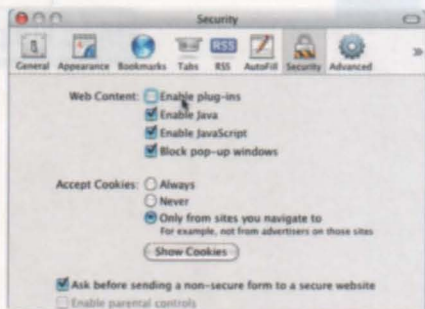
If your audio book came as multiple tracks, the Join Together program, available from the same web page, will let you join the tracks together into a single file, which will make it easier to remember where you were up to when you last listened to it.

Video killed the security star?

Q I have lost my ability to watch video clips from the BBC Archives, BBC Sport, CNET, and YouTube. Every week or so, I maintain my Mac with Onyx or Cocktail and I have DiskWarrior 4.0. I have also installed Windows Media Player, RealPlayer, VLC and QuickTime. Any ideas?

Alan Cleaver

A The fact you have a problem with virtually every kind of video suggests there's something fundamental at work, such as a problem with using plug-ins. If you've installed some security software recently that might have done something odd and if your Safari preferences have become damaged, it's very possible that that would cause it to stop using plug-ins correctly. Try seeing whether 'Web content: Enable plug-ins' is checked in Safari's Security preferences. If it's not, check it and everything should start working again. If not, quit Safari, throw out the com.apple.Safari.plist file from your



Video start If your plug-ins aren't working, there might be a simple cause

Library's Preferences folder and then restart Safari, which should fix any corruption.

If that doesn't work, you could well have disk permission problems, so you should run Disk Utility and Repair Permissions on your startup disk. It's possible you've installed some software that's misconfigured your plug-ins or installed older versions. Go to your main Library's Internet Plug-Ins folder and Get Info on them to make sure you have the latest versions installed.

It's also possible that you have an older plug-in installed in your personal Library's Internet Plug-Ins folder that's overriding the system-wide plug-ins. Check it to make sure there's nothing in there that may be interfering with your more up-to-date version.

RealPlayer also relies on an alias from the Internet plug-ins to the packaged version included with the application. If you upgrade RealPlayer without launching it afterwards, it's possible for the alias to get broken, so launch RealPlayer and let it run the installation process if it believes you've got a problem.

A picture of your account

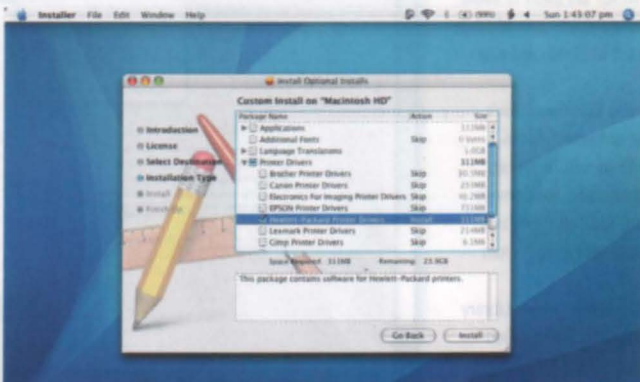
tip Every user account can have a picture associated with it. There are various ways to create a user account picture, including changing the one in your Address Book or by copying and pasting an image over the existing image in the Accounts System Preferences. But if you want to change your picture frequently and between a set of pictures, it's better to set up your own set of pictures.

Open up the images you'd like to use in Graphic Converter (www.lenksoft.com) or a similar graphics program. Then resize them using the Size>Scale command on the Picture menu to 48x48 pixels or using the equivalent command in whatever graphics application you're using (Image Size in Photoshop). Save them as TIFFs, remembering to use a .tif file extension. Then create a folder with whatever name you'd like inside the 'User Pictures' folder of the main 'Library' folder (not the one in your Home

directory). Copy your set of images into the folder. The pictures should then all show up in the list of allowable pictures in the Accounts System Preferences pane.

Work out your options

Q When using my HP Officejet K550, I no longer have the option to select two-sided output when printing PDFs from Preview, or text documents from TextEdit. The printing options no longer allows me to select Paper Type or Print Quality for these documents either. If I open the same files in Adobe Reader or Acrobat Pro, the duplex, paper and quality options are available. I have the latest driver and firmware updates from HP, and my Apple software is up to date. I'm printing from an iMac Core Duo. Andrew Schofield



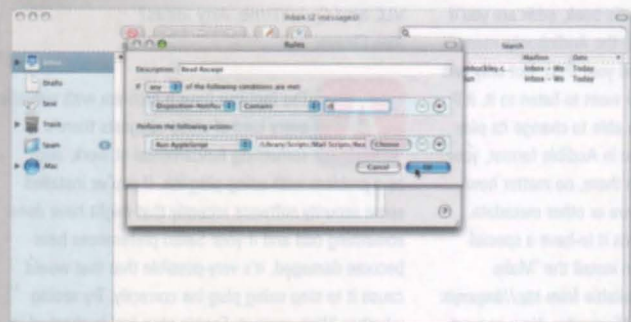
Driver reset If you've accidentally downgraded a printer driver, you can restore it using the disk that came with your current version of OS

Read receipts in Mail

Read receipts require a willing email program at both ends of the process: one that can request a read receipt at the sending end and one that can recognise that request and send a receipt back at the receiving end. Unfortunately, OS X's Mail can do neither very easily, but it is possible to do something about that.

If you are still using OS X 10.2 or 10.3, you can use Mail Priority (www.parapuni.ch/projects/mailpriority/) to add read receipt requests to your outgoing messages. Otherwise, you're going to need to use Terminal. To make Mail request a read receipt for every message you send, you need to add an additional header, the 'Disposition-Notification-To' header, to each mail message. To do this, open Terminal and type 'defaults read com.apple.mail UserHeaders'.

If you get 'The domain/default pair of (com.apple.mail, UserHeaders) does not exist', that means there are no additional headers already configured so you can simply create new ones. Enter this:



Receipt reading It is possible to set up read receipts in Mail, but it takes some effort

```
defaults write com.apple.mail UserHeaders '{"Disposition-Notification-To" = "Name <email@address>";'}
```

Replace 'Name' with your name and 'email@address' with your email address.

But if the 'defaults read' command above returns a line of values that starts with '{' and ends with '}', it means you already have some custom headers so will need to add the Disposition-Notification-To header to the list. Highlight the entire line and copy it. Type 'defaults write com.apple.mail UserHeaders "', paste the text you copied a moment ago, and add 'Disposition-Notification-To' = "Name <email@address>";' in front of the closing '}' character you just pasted, replacing Name with your name and email@address with your email address.

It might now say: 'defaults write com.apple.mail UserHeaders '{Bcc = "rob.buckley@macworld.com"; "Disposition-Notification-To" = "Rob Buckley <rob.buckley@macworld.com>"; }'

To turn requests off, you'll need to go into Terminal and type 'defaults delete com.apple.mail UserHeaders' to delete all custom headers or set UserHeaders back to what it was before.

Returning a read receipt in Mail when someone requests one is slightly harder and requires an AppleScript that you can obtain from www.macosxhints.com/dfiles/mail_r_script.txt. Load it into the AppleScript Editor, compile it and save it in the Mail Scripts folder in your Scripts folder in your Library (create it if there isn't one there already). Then go into Mail and create a new Rule in the preferences list that executes the script if Disposition-Notification-To contains @ - you'll need to use the Edit Header List... function to add Disposition-Notification-To to the list of options. The script won't send a proper, standards-compliant read receipt, but it's better than nothing.

Swapping files with Vista in Bootcamp

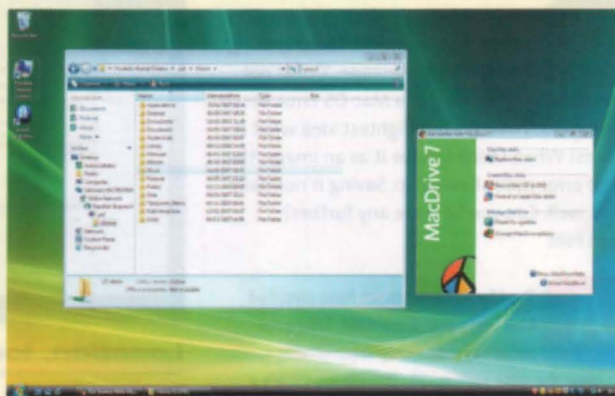
The arrival of Microsoft's Vista in conjunction with a Vista-supporting version of Apple's Bootcamp has refocused interest on the subject of file exchange. Virtualisation technology such as Parallels Desktop normally provides an easy way to exchange files between Windows and OS X: Parallels, like Virtual PC on the PowerPC side, installs software into Windows that allows it to view selected OS X folders as network drives or places.

Bootcamp, however, doesn't. Windows Vista exists as a separate partition or on a separate drive from OS X, formatted using Microsoft's NTFS scheme by default. OS X, which uses Apple's HFS+ system by default, can only read NTFS file systems, although it can read and write to FAT32. Vista can't even read HFS+. Having access to your Mac files while in Vista or being able to modify your Windows files while in OS X requires some effort.

There are a couple of things that can be done on Windows. Mediafour's MacDrive (\$50 [£25.30], www.mediafour.com/products/macdrive/) integrates HFS+ support directly into Vista, so anything you can do with an NTFS or FAT32 drive, you can do with HFS+ as well. Note that you'll need the latest version of MacDrive, version 7, to use it in Vista, although version 6 will work fine in XP.

There's always the free HFS+ Explorer from catacombae software (<http://hem.bredband.net/catacombae/index2.html>). This is far less seamless, but it will allow you to access HFS+ disks from XP and Vista.

On the OS X side, there aren't any commercial programs that



Chat to Vista Even if you're not using Parallels' Shared Folders to exchange files between OS X and Windows, there are still tools such as MacDrive that can help

are the equivalent of MacDrive, but there are a couple of open source projects that can help. MacFUSE (<http://code.google.com/p/macfuse/>) is a port of the FUSE file system framework originally developed for Linux. It allows you to add support for additional file systems without installing kernel extensions.

A You don't mention what versions of Adobe Reader and Acrobat Pro you're using, but it's pretty likely that they're older, PowerPC versions, unlike your Universal Binary Preview and TextEdit. The HP printer driver relies on 'print dialog extensions' to make print quality, paper type and duplexing options available to you. If they've not been updated to Universal Binary status, they'll only be available to programs running in Rosetta.

To see if this is the problem, 'Get Info' on Preview in the Finder. Click the check box 'Open using Rosetta' and then close the window. Then open Preview and try to print two-sided output.

Oddly enough, OS X for Intel Macs comes with support for the K550 built-in, so it's possible that you've accidentally downgraded your driver if you've downloaded and installed an older version from the HP web site. It might be worth deleting the 'hp' folder from the 'Printers' folder in the main 'Library' folder and then reinstalling the drivers. Insert the 'Mac OS X Install Disc 1' that came with your iMac, then scroll down the window that opens until you find 'Optional Installs.mpkg'. Launch it and then pick the HP drivers from the Printer Drivers list. This should restore the original driver and give you your options back.

Get back in touch with your mouse

tip The Bluetooth Mighty Mouse and Apple Bluetooth Mouse have an odd habit of going quiet. If you replace their batteries, they'll often refuse to reconnect to your Mac unless you restart it. Fortunately, there is a way round this.

Turn your mouse upside down. You'll notice that the green 'on' light flashes at periodic intervals – this

indicates that the mouse is advertising itself to your Mac but hasn't yet made contact. Now squeeze the mouse so you trigger the 'click'. Keep doing this every few seconds until the green light seems to pause then starts to speed up. Your mouse will now be connected to your Mac. If that doesn't work, turn the mouse off then on again and repeat the process.

Getting pages in order

Q My husband writes and produces a music fanzine, which is written in a standard document using Word. It is then copied into Publisher 98 and reformatted into A5 size and printed onto single-sided A4 paper in such a way that it can be taken to a high street printshop and printed double-sided and made up into A5 booklets. The problem is getting it printed into the right format (i.e. first page printed alongside the last page, second page alongside the second to the last page, etc). Can this be done in Word? Alternatively, is there a suitable print program out there that would do the job without our having to resort to high-priced desktop-publishing software?

Emma Jakes

A One of the great things about OS X is the ability to convert any document into a PDF: if you can print it, you can PDF it. From there, you can use all sorts of tools to manipulate your document, rather than having to stick with the program in which you created the document.

CocoaBooklet (<http://www.iconus.ch/fabien/cocoabooklet/>) can take any PDF generated by OS X and convert it to a booklet, and has plenty of options to make sure it's exactly the way you want it.

It also installs a PDF Service.

The first time you run CocoaBooklet, it will ask if you want to install the service. If you do, the next time you try to print something, you'll notice that the 'Save as PDF' button at the bottom of the print dialog – if you're running anything earlier than OS X 10.4 – has been replaced with an icon of a PDF (if you have Tiger, you'll already have a PDF button). Click on it and a pop-up menu will appear giving you the option to 'Make a Booklet' as well as 'Save as PDF'. If you select it, OS X will automatically pass the PDF you create straight over to CocoaBooklet.

Block traffic to particular sites

tip Websites like www.didtheyreadit.com and www.msgtag.com allow someone to know if, and when, you've read an email message by embedding images in their HTML. However, it is possible to stop these services from working.

Little Snitch (\$24.95 [£12.62], <http://www.obdev.at/products/littlesnitch/>) works like a firewall, but instead of blocking incoming traffic, blocks outgoing traffic. If there are any requests to access a site, it'll flag them up.

A free way of blocking traffic to specific sites is to open Terminal and type 'sudo pico /etc/hosts'. Type in your password, then use the down arrow key to go to the bottom of the page of text that opens. Now enter '0.0.0.0', press the Tab or space key, then type 'didtheyreadit.com'. This is the site containing the images Didtheyreadit.com embeds in emails to track them.

Press Return to start a new line. Then add '0.0.0.0 img.msgtag.com'. This will stop Msgtag's images. Now press the Ctrl and X keys, then press Y when asked if you want to save your changes.

Press Return to accept the /etc/hosts filename then restart your Mac. Now any attempt by an email to download embedded tracking images will fail, since your Mac won't be able to find the server where the images are stored.

Of mice and Macs

Apple's Bluetooth Mighty Mouse will often fail to reconnect to your Mac after you change its batteries

Cracking the Toast code

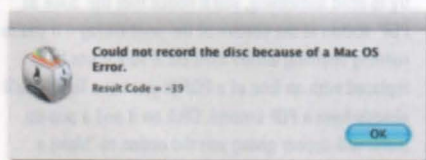
Q I've been trying to burn a video CD using Toast. However, I keep getting the following message: 'Could not record the disc because of a Mac OS Error. Result Code = -39'. I haven't the slightest idea what it means! When I tried to save it as an image, the same error code showed up. Saving it normally went well. Can you help me any further?

Simon Pollit

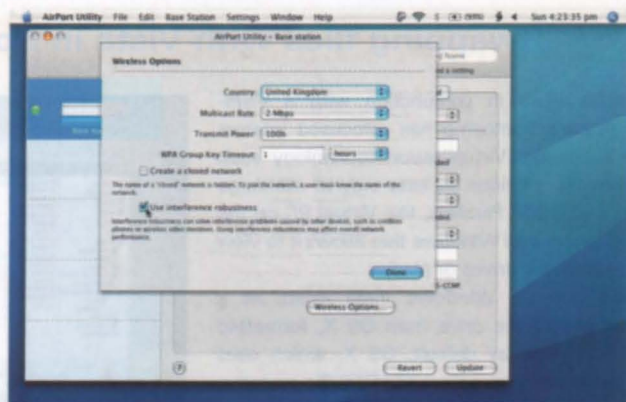
A The Mac OS error codes have mystified Mac users ever since 1984. Mac error codes are notoriously impenetrable.

Here, the error code is -39. This means there's a problem with the file. Make sure you have the latest version of Toast – it's now at version 8.0.1. Toast and Jam are prone to bugs that give -39 as an error, but Roxio has typically been very good at stamping them out whenever they've been found.

Next, check the file itself. Error -39 means 'logical end-of-file reached'. The file might be damaged, or it might be too big for a Video CD. Check that it's the right size for a Video CD and that it's playable in QuickTime. Booting up off your system CD/DVD and then running Disk Utility's Repair Disk function on the disk that contains your movie is a good follow-up, and if you have things like TechTool Pro or Disk Warrior, run them, too.



Code cracking Working out the OS X error codes is harder than it should be



Location, location

tip OS 9 may be long gone, but Apple hasn't yet replaced all of its features with OS X equivalents. As well as the now-defunct utility for laptop users wanting to sync files with their main computer, there was also the Location Manager for changing system settings based on your location. While OS X still has locations for network preferences, those locations don't control printer, time zone, SMTP servers, or other settings that Location Manager used to control.

Fortunately, there are some alternatives. WiMa (\$20 [£10.12], <http://www.codehackers.net/wima/>) and Location X (\$20 [£10.12], <http://homepage.mac.com/locationmanager/>) both let you set up different locations that will activate according to various triggers, such as detecting a particular WiFi network.

Something in the air tonight

Q My office is set up for WiFi with the Apple AirPort Express. My Quicksilver G4 is fine and has all bars up on the

Radio signals Turning Interference Robustness off can often increase – or decrease – the speed of your network

Airport status icon. My PowerBook has full bars on the status too, but our iMac seems to have a weak connection with only 1-2 bars on the signal. Could this be a fault with the AirPort card in the iMac? We are running a printer and speakers off the Express box, too, and they are rubbish when running from the iMac.

Nick Lord

A It's unlikely to be the card that's the problem. What's more likely is interference. Although WiFi is supposed to go up to 200 metres or so, it doesn't and can be affected by anything from furniture to Bluetooth devices. Put the AirPort Express somewhere high up, with an unimpeded view of the other computers. If possible, put the iMac closest to the Express since different Macs have different quality aerials and the iMac's may not be as good as the G4's or the PowerBook's. You should also check the Interference Robustness settings on the Express box (use the AirPort Admin Utility to change the settings) and in the Mac clients. Also, take a look to see whether the Express is set up for 802.11g, 802.11b or both. Have a play with those settings, but usually pure g with Interference Robustness off works well.

The best 802.11n network

It's been a long time coming but the draft standard of the 802.11n standard is finally here and in shipping products. The successor to 802.11b (aka AirPort), 802.11g (aka AirPort Extreme) and 802.11a (aka 802.11a) is faster, has a longer range, and is less prone to interference. If you're planning on buying an Apple TV, it's practically mandatory for you to buy an Apple AirPort Extreme Base Station that supports 802.11n as well, since you really will need its speed.

Like 802.11g, 802.11n is backward compatible to the preceding standards. Unlike 802.11n, it's not backwards compatible with all those standards simultaneously – at least, not in the UK. So what are the best settings to use for your new 802.11n network?

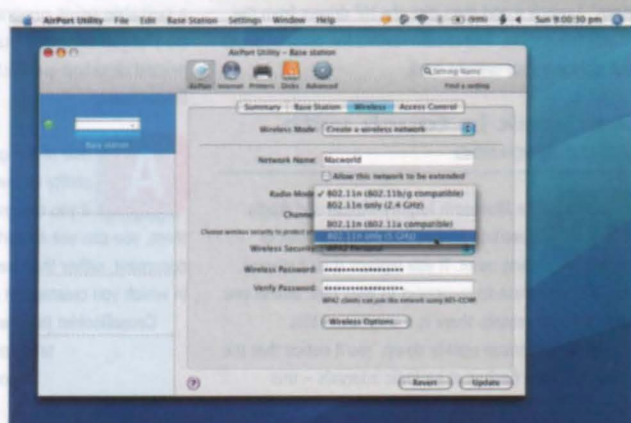
You've probably already got a router from your ISP, so your best bet is to use that to provide your internet connection – if you put your AEBS into backwards-compatibility mode, it'll be slower and reduce its speed to match that of the slowest device on the network. Then, you can use the AEBS to provide pure 802.11n by plugging its WAN port into a LAN port on the router and reconfiguring it.

This will have several advantages. It'll be faster, and will be visible to far fewer devices and hackers.

A quick glance at the Radio Mode settings for an AEBS in the AirPort Utility will show you that 802.11n operates in two frequencies: the 802.11b/g frequency of 2.4GHz and 802.11a's 5GHz range. In the UK, we can only use one or the other, not both.

It might be tempting to go for the 802.11b/g range, but that's the same one everyone else is using. If you're in a crowded block of flats

that's full of wireless routers, each router is going to be transmitted in the same range, negotiating which channels to use, suffering packet collisions and more. So picking the 5GHz range will improve the speed of your network. It's worth noting that 5GHz has a reduced range, so you're best off using this range if you're dealing with devices that have line-of-sight access, but 2.4GHz if you're going to be dealing with devices that don't have that luxury.



WiFi range You have a choice of ranges when setting up an 802.11n network, some of which will give you definite speed advantages