Computer Tips

Networking in Windows 7

Setting up a network in Windows 7 is now a lot easier thanks to HomeGroup. HomeGroup is a new feature in Windows 7 that makes file and printer sharing on a home network so easy almost anyone can set it up in about thirty seconds. Literally.

A homegroup makes it a snap for us to access files and printers on other PCs on our office network. For instance, if I'm using my laptop in the house, I can easily access files stored on the desktop PC in our office. I can also print to our office printer without even getting up from my chair.

But that's not all a homegroup can do. It also makes it easy to stream media to devices in your home—for example, to an electronic picture frame, or to a current-generation TV. To learn more about streaming media to devices in your home, you can do a search on Microsoft's website for Homegroup and Media Streaming.

To setup a HomeGroup in Windows 7, you must have an existing network in place, ie, a network router and network cables to each PC, or a wireless router, and wireless receivers on each computer. Also, to run HomeGroup between computers, each computer must be running Windows 7. All versions of Windows 7 support HomeGroup, although Windows 7 Starter and Windows 7 Home Basic can join a HomeGroup, but not create one.

To create a homegroup, select a computer on the network to "host" the HomeGroup. On this computer, open HomeGroup in Control Panel, and then click **Create a homegroup**. Then select the libraries and printer/s you want to share over the HomeGroup. Then click Next, and a HomeGroup password will be shown. Print this out, as you will need this password later.

Now, go to each of the other computers on your network, open HomeGroup in Control Panel, and clicked **Join now**. When prompted, enter the HomeGroup password you printed out earlier. Finally, select the libraries and/or printers you want to share on the other computers.

To access your HomeGroup-ed computers, on any of the computers, go to Start, Computer, and in Explorer a new group will be show on the left called HomeGroup, with all the shared computers listed underneath.

For further information on Windows 7 Home Grouping, you can call our office on 4171 0981, or contact us through our website, www.mcsit.com.au