

# Three Ways to Improve Wireless Network Access for Clients

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Wireless networking has been a massive boon for those organizations with employees constantly on the go. Whether they're staying in hotels across the country, or just roaming around the building doesn't matter. What does matter is that they need to have network access no matter how far they are from a LAN port.

If your company has workers who rely on wireless networking, here are three tips to improve your wireless strategy -- especially if the company has multiple wireless locations.

**Tip #1. Consider a client-side DNS cache.** When you're roaming, the biggest disadvantage isn't just that you're at the mercy of different ISPs, but also different public DNS servers. The one you use at work might be lightning-fast, but the one you use from home or on the road may be intolerably slow. Slow DNS translates to slow browsing, slow email, and slow everything else.

To work around this problem, set up a DNS cache on the user's notebook computer. Such a program retains and asynchronously checks DNS entries for far longer than their usual lifetime. Since DNS entries for domain names rarely change, this works out well. Furthermore, it translates into a speed boost for wireless browsing, since it's one less lookup the computer needs to perform. One such cache is the freeware program, AnalogX's FastCache.

**Tip #2. Use a network profile switcher for multiple network setups.** Windows is smart enough to recognize different wireless networks and allow you to connect to them individually, but it doesn't do the complete job. If at home a user has different mapped drives or other network resources than at work, putting them all in the same network profile may not be such a good idea -- they might possibly be in collision with each other. It gets worse if you travel between multiple job sites.

For a solution to this, consider a third-party application like JitBit's Net Profile Switch, which automatically changes between multiple network scenarios such as drive and directory mappings, third-party program profiles and many others.

**Tip #3. Avoid wi-fi hotspot mail blocks.** Many public and for-pay wireless networks in hotels, airports and public places routinely block port 25 for outgoing email. If users routinely send outgoing mail from their machines and don't have access to a VPN, there are three workarounds:

- Set up a VPN (whenever possible) to your mail server. This is a big undertaking, but in the long run it'll probably be worth it.
- For your users on the road, set up a dedicated mail sender that does not use port 25. Admittedly, this solution is a little unorthodox, and you need to make sure it will only accept mail from people with the proper credentials to avoid having it turned into a spammer's paradise.

- Use a third-party product like SpotLock, which allows for email delivery from wi-fi hotspots and adds a host of other security and enhancement features on top of it.

*Editor's note: After this tip appeared, a reader wrote in wondering why the article did not mention the solution of setting up SMTP through the standard port of 587. The author responded, "Most clients can indeed handle using secure SMTP, but it may not be available for all servers. For instance, if you get your email from a conventional provider rather than (for instance) your own Exchange boxes, many of them don't offer this feature."*

**About the author:** *Serdar Yegulalp is editor of the [Windows Power Users Newsletter](#), which is devoted to hints, tips, tricks, news and goodies for Windows NT, Windows 2000 and Windows XP users and administrators. He has more than 10 years of Windows experience under his belt, and contributes regularly to [SearchWinSystems.com](#) and [SearchSQLServer.com](#).*