Tuning the Mancave!

Ok you have spent hundreds on your mancave and now have a big screen HDTV, a stereo home entertainment and a computer station tucked away in the corner. You own a digital camera and your wife is gently encouraging (no nagging here) you to show her the pics that you took on the last few holidays. They are still jammed into the directory that you created for the download from the camera or on the CD that Walmart printed for you. You know that she will not be satisfied with e low resolution CD pics or the small pics that you can watch on the computer screen. "You bought HDTV, I want to see HD pics from the camera!" she cries. What to do?

Network the PC to the TV: use the wireless computer network or hardwire it with an ethernet connection. Not so simple but it can be done. An ethernet connection will only use the TV as an extra monitor, you will still need to control it from the computer, which is probably in the next room or many feet away from the TV. So it has to be wireless. If you don't have a wireless network and own two or more computers - get one. Wireless networks and wireless equipped computers have to be some of the wonders of the world. Fire up the old laptop, click on find networks and eureka you are connected, marvellous.

Why network the TV to watch pictures? For me it was simple, the DVDs that you can burn with picture collections only have a maximum resolution of 780, usually 480, and on a big screen 1080 HDTV, they look blurred. You have 1080 and that's what you want to watch the pics in. Looking around the mancave you find that first device that the kids have hooked up was the gaming console. That's all you need to view pics. Two of the most common consoles are the X-Box, made by Microsoft and PlayStation3 (PS3) made by Sony. Both can be networked but only the PS3 can play BluRay DVDs. That was the clincher for me. At the time I purchased my PS3 it was also the cheapest BluRay player on the market.

Unpack the PS3, hook up the component wires or the HDMI cord, allocate the connected input to the TV and stand back. Oops, where are the pics? In the computer, that's where, all we have to do is coordinate the network to see them. In the system setup menu of the PS3 you will notice that you are required to know many things: SSID, WEP key, mac address, media server name, and more gobbledy-gook. You remember what the salesman said, "The PS3 can be networked - all you do is share the mediaserver and let the PS3 find it and everything will be done automatically!" "Easier said than done", but "perseverance pays off" and "if everything came easily it wouldn't be worth it", and many other platitudes came to mind. But it can be done if you are willing to play with every setting known to man.

The theory of the hookup
Step one: go to the computer and open up the Windows Media Player, this is the program that you play your tunes on. Inside the Library menu you find a line item - Media Sharing. Explore that box and click on "Share my media", open settings and click on the media to be shared.

Step two: determine the information needed from the wireless router (the box that all the cables hook into, usually between the internet modem, which is connected to the telephone jack and the main computer) and write them down.
Step three: follow the instructions in the PS3 Quick Reference Guide.

The actual hookup consists of attempting the outlined steps, but if the router has been secured by assigning a password then all kinds of mayhem will ensue as you work through the steps. All went well for me until I decided to secure my network. It is true that the PS3 can be networked easily if the network has no password. Putting a password in to mine denied access to the PS3. Getting the PS3 on the network took a full three days of effort, scouring the internet for any kind of problems encountered by others and reading appeals for help in tech forums. Learning a new language was part of the solution. The PS3 needs to know the SSID and the WEP key and Access Point and what a Mac Filter is. The SSID is the name you have given the router. The WEP key is the 10 digit password that you established, with the help of the friendly call centre agent in the Phillippines when you ran into problems when you tried to secure the router and the Access Point is the router and you try to forget about the Mac Filter. Having entered all the information the PS3 failed to find the network - back to Google.

One suggestion, In one forum, was to "assign an IP address to the PS3". An IP address is the address assigned to each computer on the network. The router is supposed to automatically give these devices an IP whenever the device asks to be let into the router. If it doesn't, then you tell the router the IP of the PS3, you will assign an IP to the PS3 by entering one into a line in the PS3 setup. Didn't work - back to Google. This step took time as I had to learn about IP addresses.

Full of knowledge about IP addresses I took the next suggestion, "Go into the 'gaming box' on the router and set up the Ports to receive the signal from the PS3". Ports are specific access points inside the router, they are set by entering code into the correct boxes in the router configuration and if you tune them to receive the correct signal then you are in. The codes needed were part of the suggestion in the forum; entered as detailed and tried the PS3 for access. Didn't work - back to Google.

Two days in to the frustration and I was still persevering with all the ideas that others had tried and the PS3 was still not connected. But then I happened on to the suggestion, "Disconnect then mac address". The mac address is a security filter that is of a lower level than the WEP key password. But the router still looks for the mac address even if the WEP key is used as the password. Back into router configuration and disabled the mac address filtering — Bingo, I was in. Not touching any more controls or code the PS3 was switched off and on many times and access was allowed every time. Success at last; my mancave was

complete, my wife looked at high resolution pics and I haven't got a clue what the final sign of success was, but who cared after three days of hairpulling, blue air and many kicks at the door between the mancave and the router she could watch her pics!