

How Do I Know When It Is Time to Buy a New Wi-Fi Router?

Kurt Jefferson, Central Kentucky Computer Society

Shortly before Halloween last year, I noticed my Internet connection was getting slower and slower. I would visit CKCS.org to check the latest newsletter. Then I would visit The Animal Rescue Site to give free food to shelter pets. The Animal Rescue Site | Click to Feed Rescue Animals (greatergood.com)

Molasses pours faster out of the bottle than my Internet service. So I ran the free Speedtest app on my Macs and iPad. My Internet speed was as fast as usual.

But the connection was problematic. Pages were relatively slow to load. Delivery of email was on the pony express route. I would open my email app, and new mail would eventually appear.

I considered what was going on and realized that my eight-year-old WiFi router might be the problem. Most folks don't realize the beating their routers encounter. They can get very warm and have to deal with interference from neighbors' signals, microwave ovens, and even wireless landline phones. In addition, electrical spikes in the home (when the refrigerator compressor kicks on or the dryer is running) can take a toll on the router, even if it's plugged into a surge protector.

After checking everything I could think of, I ordered a new TP-Link router from Amazon (using smile.amazon.com, so CKCS gets a portion of what I'm paying Amazon.)

TP-Link is one of the top-rated routers, according to thewirecutter.com, one of my favorite review websites.

If you're wondering about your Wi-Fi router's performance, here are some signs your device is failing, according to robots.net:

- **Slow Internet** - If web pages are loading more slowly than normal, that's a telltale sign that your router is not up to par. robots.net recommends plugging an ethernet cable from your computer into the router (and turning Wi-Fi off on your desktop or laptop.) If the signal perks up and pages load much faster, that's a clear indication your router's performance is failing. If you are streaming a show and the website on your computer or app on your iPad rebuffers constantly (a circular arrow often turns on the screen when there's a signal problem), that's a sign all is not right in router-land.

- Your router stops functioning altogether or the indicator lights stop glowing - This is an obvious indication that your router cannot function properly. But, of course, you want to check your internet service provider first to make sure there's no outage in your neighborhood.
- Overheating - This occurs more often than most people realize. robots.net writes, "Most routers, depending on the brand, are made from quality materials that can withstand minor impacts and heat. However, routers aging from three to five years and up can be damaged by heat. So, if you've been using your device longer than the mentioned average lifespan and it suddenly breaks down, perhaps its internal components are no longer working due to heat. When this happens, try to move your router to a place where the airflow is good or place a fan pointing at the device and see if it exhibits any difference. If not, it's about time to replace your router with a newer version."

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