🖥️ Computer Corner

Securing Your Wireless Computer

(NAPSA)—Wireless Internet connections aren't just convenient for you—they also may be convenient for hackers. Fortunately, it isn't difficult to protect yourself.

Wireless systems can be particularly vulnerable to digital intruders, possibly putting sensitive or private data at risk. However, you can protect yourself by using WEP or WPA encryption, which require users to enter a password before they are allowed to access your wireless network.

These encryption methods are described in easy-to-understand language in a new book called "Geeks On Call Wireless Networking: 5-Minute Fixes" (Wiley, $14.95). The book also offers expert advice and step-by-step explanations of topics ranging from configuring a wireless router to troubleshooting a slow connection.

Here are some additional tips from the book that can help you protect your wireless network.

• Reduce the range of your network. Doing so can keep nosy neighbors from intruding on your connection. Move your wireless router into the center of your home and decrease its power settings.

• Pick a new password. Most routers have a default password of "admin." Be sure to change it.

• Disable SSID broadcasting. Most wireless routers broadcast the names of user networks (SSIDs) so that other users can log on. This could be a security risk.

• Use encryption to protect

No Strings Attached—It's important to secure your computer when working wirelessly.

credit card information you send wirelessly over the Web. Also, only use your card on a Web site that has SSL encryption (look for a padlock in the corner of the site).

• Disable your wireless card when not in use. There's no better way to secure your computer.

• Use a firewall, which is a program that shields your computer from Internet criminals.

• Don't use shared files. Remove all important documents from your Shared Files folder before accessing a public network.

• If you use a wireless laptop, disable the feature that attempts to connect your laptop to any available wireless network. For most Windows-based laptops, double-click the wireless icon in the lower right corner of Windows. Then click "Properties." Click the "Wireless Network" tab. Next, click the "Advanced" button. Uncheck the "Automatically Connect to Non-Preferred Networks" option. Finally, click "Close."

For more information, visit www.geeksoncall.com.