Can I use a hub, mini-hub, switch, or broadband home router to put multiple machines on MITnet?

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On this page:

Answer

On-campus DLC's
MIT Dormitories

Answer

No, the use of network distribution devices on MITnet is not allowed. These devices include hubs, repeaters, switches, and routers. While these devices might work just fine when used in a home office environment, they are not intended for use as part of a large network such as MITnet. No hot spots on MIT networks are allowed, either. Very often these devices fail and bring down the network for the whole building in which they are located. Therefore, we do not allow people to use them to connect multiple machines to the network. Information Systems and Technology (IS&T) reserves the right to turn off network service to illegal devices (and any machines connected to such a device) in order to keep the network running smoothly for everyone.

On-campus DLC's

The supported method of connecting multiple machines to MITnet is to have a dedicated network drop installed for each machine. This gives you greater reliability and a higher quality of network service than using a hub, and it will not cause service problems for other users of the network. This method is generally the approach taken for on-campus offices, labs, and teaching spaces. See http://ist.mit.edu/pricelists/network for Ethernet installation procedures and applicable fees.

MIT Dormitories

In the MIT residence halls it is not usually possible to install additional drops for additional computers on demand. Reasons such as resident turnover, limited wired infrastructure capabilities, and other building constraints factor into this limitation. Most recently built or renovated dormitories have two network drops per person, so this should not be a problem. However, many of the older dorms with aging wired infrastructure are limited to a single drop per resident and sometimes, in the case of some of the older family housing, a single drop per student*. MIT is working through the Department of Resident Life and IS&T to upgrade aging infrastructure as funding and resources become available, but like many physical improvement projects this will take time. In the meantime Housing and IS&T implemented an aggressive wireless deployment plan for the MIT residence halls to provide complete wireless coverage in the dorms. Wireless network adapters are available for all types of computers and operating systems. There are even wireless interfaces that simply plug into your USB port. This should alleviate most network availability issues residents in older dorms encounter due to any shortage of physical network drops.

*The case of only one active network drop per student is a minimal standard for rooms in MIT residence halls, which MIT will strive to meet even in the case of infrastructure problems. If you find yourself in a room with fewer than one active network drop per resident student (for example, due to crowding) please contact us via http://ist.mit.edu/network/install and we will strive to have the minimum number of required drops installed. Please include the names and usernames of all residents in the affected room.