**What is Infrastructure Mode in Wireless Networking?**

**Infrastructure mode** wireless networking bridges (joins) a wireless network to a wired [Ethernet](http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/ethernet1/g/bldef_ethernet.htm) network while supporting [central connection points](http://compnetworking.about.com/od/wireless/ss/wirelessgear_2.htm) for local wireless clients.

Setting up an infrastructure [mode network](http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/wirelessproducts/f/apbridgingmode.htm) requires at least one [wireless access point (AP)](http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/wireless/g/bldef_ap.htm). The AP and all local wireless clients must be configured to use the

same [network name](http://compnetworking.about.com/od/basicnetworkingfaqs/f/network-name.htm) ([SSID](http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/wireless/g/bldef_ssid.htm)). The AP is cabled to the wired network to allow wireless clients access to, for example, Internet connections or printers. Additional APs can be joined to this network to increase reach of the infrastructure and support more wireless clients. [Home networks](http://compnetworking.about.com/od/routers/f/two_routers.htm) with [*wireless routers*](http://compnetworking.about.com/od/wirelessrouters/bb/wirelessrouter.htm) support infrastructure mode automatically as these routers include a built in AP.

Compared to the alternative of [ad-hoc wireless](http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/wirelessfaqs/f/adhocwireless.htm) networks, infrastructure mode networks offer the advantage of scale, centralized security management and improved reach. The disadvantage of infrastructure [wireless networks](http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/wireless/f/whatiswireless.htm) is simply the additional cost to purchase AP hardware.