

Figure 1-1 shows a typical network with four computers. You can see that all four computers are connected by a network cable to a central network device (in this case, a home router). This component, common in small networks, actually consists of three distinct but related network devices:

- » **Router:** Connects your computers to the Internet
- » **Switch:** Allows you to connect two or more computers together with cables
- » **Wireless access point:** Lets you connect computers and other devices to your network without using cables

In the figure, you can see that two computers — Bart’s gaming computer and Homer’s old 1989 computer — are connected via cables to the switch component of the home router. You can also see that Lisa connects her laptop to the network wirelessly. Marge also connects her iPad to the network wirelessly.

You can also see in the figure that Homer’s computer has a printer attached to it. Because of the network, Bart, Lisa, and Marge can also use this printer.

Finally, you can see that the entire network is connected to the Internet via the router.

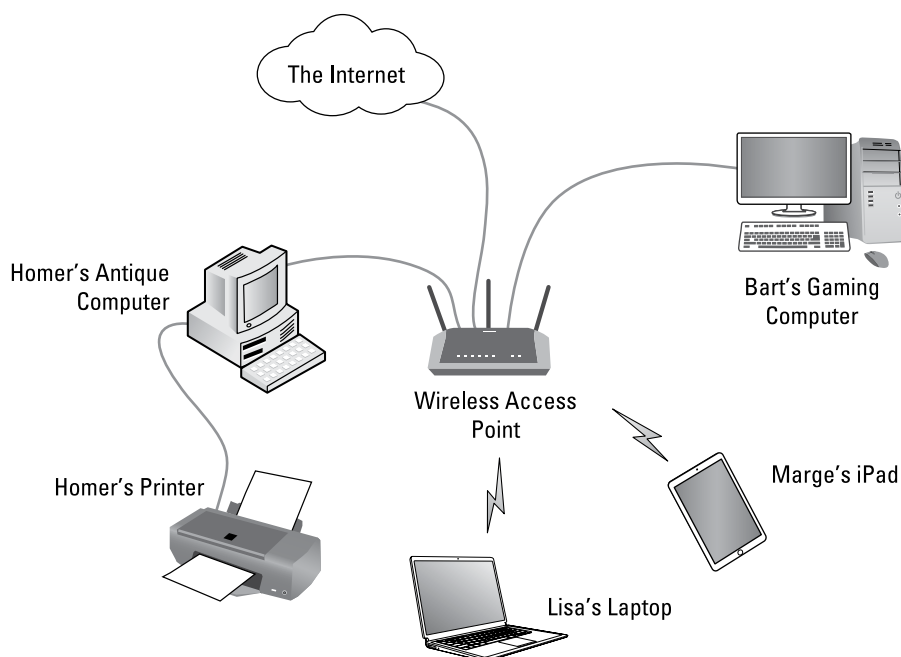


FIGURE 1-1:
A typical network.