



FIGURE 8-3:
A wireless access point connects a wireless network to a cabled network.

An access point and all the wireless computers that are connected to it are called a *Basic Service Set (BSS)*. Each BSS is identified by a *Service Set Identifier (SSID)*. When you configure an access point, you specify the SSID that you want to use. The default SSID on most access points is a generic name that often includes the name of the manufacturer of the device. However, you can easily change the SSID to something more meaningful.

Multifunction WAPs



TIP

Wireless access points often include other built-in features. Some access points double as Ethernet switches, sporting a bank of RJ-45 ports that you can plug other computers or devices into. In addition, some access points include broadband cable or DSL firewall routers that enable you to connect to the Internet. Figure 8-4 shows a typical 802.11ac wireless router intended for home or small office use. A device of this type would typically include the following:

- » An 802.11ac wireless access point that can support multiple wireless devices
- » A router with firewall capabilities that can be connected directly to the Internet output from a cable or DSL router
- » A four-port gigabit Ethernet switch to connect cabled computers or other devices
- » One or more USB ports that enable you to connect USB printers or disk drives to your network



TIP

A multifunction access point designed to serve as an Internet gateway for home networks is sometimes called a *wireless router* or a *residential gateway*.