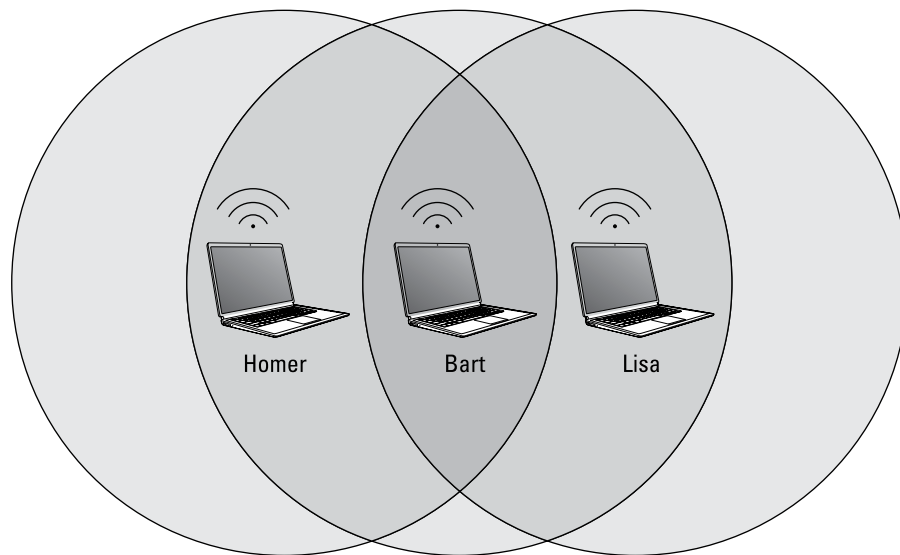


connection speed will be slow. You should also realize that when you're at the edge of the wireless device's range, you're more likely to lose your connection suddenly due to bad weather.



**FIGURE 8-2:**  
Homer, Bart, and  
Lisa playing with  
their wireless  
network.

## Using Wireless Network Adapters

Each computer that will connect to your wireless network needs a wireless network adapter, which is similar to the network interface card (NIC) used for a standard Ethernet connection. Instead of having a cable connector on the back, however, a wireless network adapter has an antenna.

Just about all portable computers, such as notebooks and tablets, come with wireless networking built in, so you don't have to add a separate wireless network adapter to a portable computer. Desktop computers, though, are a different story. They often don't have built-in wireless networking. If yours doesn't, you'll have to purchase one of two types of wireless adapters:

- » **A wireless PCI card:** You install this wireless network adapter in an available slot inside your desktop computer. Yup, you need to take your computer apart, so use this type of card only if you have the expertise and the nerves to dig into your computer's guts. A typical 802.11ac version costs about \$75.
- » **A wireless USB adapter:** This gizmo is a separate device that plugs into a USB port on your computer. A USB adapter should cost about the same as a PCI adapter. And you can install it without taking your computer apart.