aspect that was identified by a mere 8 percent of the California professionals. Integrity can be viewed as the consistent adherence to established moral principles, rules, laws or professional codes of conduct. This aspect of the study is notable because Hawaii, often viewed as a "laid-back" place where rules are flexible, actually seems to hold consistency to established rules as highly important in the business environment. Because integrity is not rated as highly in California, someone from Hawaii doing business in that state may need to prepare for less consistency in application of rules.

Finally, in both states, the third most common aspect defining ethical business practices was "fairness," with 16 percent of Hawaii professionals and 17 percent of California professionals providing that response. Fairness can be viewed as a lack of bias and an equitable treatment of people.

It is important to remember that the results of this study are specifically associated with ethical business practices, which are potentially different from a person's general perspective on ethics.

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TECH VIEW

Wireless access point important

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By Kiman Wong

As I write this final column in a series on home networking, I'm sitting at a laptop in our living room, using a wireless network that I set up for our family a few years ago.

The beauty of this technology is that I can go just about anywhere in my home and be connected to the Internet.

Way cool, if you ask me.

For most folks interested in getting their family online in the most expedient and flexible possible way, this is the ticket.

True, old-fashioned wired (Ethernet) networks are faster and often cheaper, but you'll have to drill holes in yours walls and/or crawl under your home to pull cable and that is not fun. Today, more than 1 million homes in this country have wireless networks and, according to Parks Research, a Dallas market research company, that figure will grow to 8 million by late 2006. It's no wonder thousands of families in Hawaii are going wireless, too.

When I set up our wireless home network, I used the 802.11b standard. 802.11b hardware is still far and away the most popular. It's now cheap and ubiquitous. You can even buy wireless gear at Costco. Even with its 5Mbits/sec of usable throughput, it's much faster than most DSL broadband connections and fast enough for most of us.

However, I would not install 802.11b today. Not that it's obsolete, but wireless technology has evolved. Files are getting bigger and the overall quantity of data we're using in networks necessitates larger pipes. 802.11g provides much greater speed (54Mbits/sec.) and no doubt we'll all need that someday soon.

Why?

If you're just surfing the Web or downloading e-mail, the speed difference between 11b and 11g isn't

Wireless by the numbers

802.11a

>> Has a 54Mbits/sec link speed and offers a maximum usable throughput of about 25Mbits/sec.
>> Uses a 5GHz carrier frequency, which avoids interference from microwave ovens and cordless telephones. Early versions had lousy range, but newer chip sets have improved coverage.
>> Generally the most expensive of the three standards and is used mostly by businesses.

802.11b

>> It's the original standard and still very practical (and less expensive). Because of more limited throughput compared to the newer technologies, it's losing steam.
>> Uses a 2.4GHz carrier frequency -- the same range as microwave ovens and cordless telephones, which can effect performance.

noticeable. However, once you start moving large files, or streaming video, you'll really want 802.11g's greater bandwidth.

The 802.11g's 2.4GHz carrier frequency does a fine job of covering much of your house, though the signal doesn't always reach everywhere. (This is the case for most wireless networks.) Another plus for the technology is that it works with "b" components -- in geekspeak, that's called backwards compatible. In other words, if your wireless laptop has an "11b" card an 11g access point will work with it.

Setting up an access point

The cardinal rule with either 802.11b or 802.11g is to place your access point -- a hardware device that acts as a communication hub for your network -- in a central location, as high as possible, in your house. In doing so, you establish a kind of signal umbrella under which you'll

802.11g

>> Hs become a popular standard -- a good blend of speed and practicality.
>> Is backward-compatible with 802.11b and is cheaper than 802.11a.
>> Though more expensive than 802.11b gear, 802.11g offers equally good coverage and much better performance than the "standard."
>> Represents the best balance of price and performance for home networking needs. If you get an 802.11g system you'll ensure that when friends come over, your network will most likely support them. This is the one I would choose.

have a better shot at covering most of your home. You don't really need to see the AP, which is about the size of a hardcover book. I put mine high in my bedroom hallway. The location is midway between our living room and the bedrooms and we're able to get decent coverage upstairs and out on the deck.

Spend a little time experimenting where to place the AP. Keep in mind that you need to route both Ethernet cable and a power cable to that "perfect spot."

When finding your AP spot, you'll want to avoid pushing the wireless signal through too many walls (or floors), or among large objects such as refrigerators or massive furniture. The wireless signals lose strength every time they pass through obstacles and the signal can degrade. You may have to compromise between the best signal performance and a feasible location.

I like to use the two-wall rule. You can get a pretty good signal after going through two walls. Any more than that and the signal starts to degrade.

Of course, you'll have to install wireless network adapters on all the PCs in your home. These are inexpensive to buy (around $25) and fairly easy to set up. If the signal strength at every PC good or better, you may not need to do much more tweaking.

Every situation is different, however, and if your house has some quirks or dead spots that make coverage difficult, you may want to buy a wireless signal repeater or "range extender." This will set you back around $60. As the name suggests, it can extend your network's coverage into those tough-to-reach places in your home.

You may encounter interference from your cordless phone or microwave oven (they use the same frequency band). If you see your signal strength going up and down, you should follow the instructions in your AP manual to change the "channel number."

Lastly, but of high importance, is security. Although it's not the easiest thing to configure, you should activate your wireless system's security (Note that out of the box, the default is turned off). If you leave your AP unsecured, you're letting anyone in the close vicinity (out on your street or next door, for example) use your Internet connection and have access to your local network. Follow the instruction on your AP to turn on WEP and/or MAC address filtering. If you can't figure it out, get some help doing this from your AP vendor or a trusted geek.

Once you get your wireless network set up, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it. It has allowed our family be become a lot more productive. I find it's fun to work any place in the house that suits my mood.

And your kids will thank you.

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