



Article published on January 12th 2012 | [Internet](#)

Over the past ten or so years, our homes have become filled with devices that allow us to consume digital content. Whereas most homes used to contain a single desktop PC for all the family to use, it is increasingly common to find multiple PCs and laptops in a single household. Smartphones are also common and devices like tablets are also increasing in popularity. Even newer television models are capable of connecting to the internet.

To store content, most people either simply use the hard-drive space on their computers or they buy server s to make the data accessible for the entire household. Remote servers, like Apple's iCloud, are also gaining popularity, but are reliant on a continuous internet connection to be accessible. For those of us who live in areas without broadband coverage that still using dial-up connections though, this is not a feasible mode of storage. As people try to find new ways to save money, a form of server that is becoming more common to find in a home is an old laptop or PC that has been converted for household storage.

While it is possible to harvest parts from your old PC or laptop to build a server, many people lack the knowledge of computer hardware to make this route feasible. Instead, it is possible to download some basic server software that will set up a PC you already own to run as a server while allowing you to restrict which files computers in your home can access or alter. This will free up space on the hard drives of your family's PCs and laptops, helping them to run faster and removing the potential for data loss should someone's computer suffer a crash or should any member of the household accidentally download a file that contains a virus.

If you are not confident enough to set up your machine as a server yourself, contact a local computer repair shop. For a small fee, the specialist staff there should be able to install the software you need and talk you through some basic tasks that you, as server administrator, will need to perform occasionally to ensure the system runs at its optimum ability. If you want to increase the data storage capabilities of your new server, you can either buy external hard drives and connect them via USB or you can ask the specialist to install more memory when you take your machine to your local computer repair shop. If increasing the internal hard drive is not feasible, they will advise you on the next best course of action.

With a dedicated machine acting as your home server, you will be able to free up your hard disk for more important documents plus share files with your family by simply copying and pasting files onto your server, allowing for instant access. Data has never been so easy to share.

Article Source:

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Article Keywords:

buy server, computer parts UK, Netgear routers

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