Connect a PlayStation 3 to your network

Sony's latest console can act as a bridge between your computer and TV. Here's how

We have talked a fair deal about sharing media such as video, music and images using a network in this *Ultimate Guide*. If you have a PlayStation 3 (PS3) games console at home, then you already have a media streaming device. Not only that, but connecting your PS3 to the internet via your network can open up a whole new world of possibilities, includi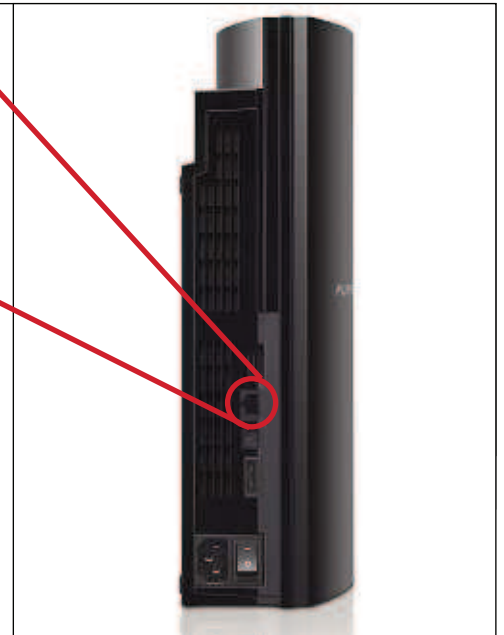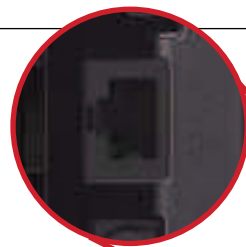ng online multiplayer gaming, downloadable demos, trailers and movies from the PlayStation Store, and the ability to automatically download the latest system software on your console whenever Sony issues a new update.

The PS3 can connect to your PC either by using a network cable that plugs into your router or a wireless connection as it has Wi-fi built in.

In this workshop, we'll show you how to do both and stream material stored on your PC to your TV.

Step 1

First you need to choose between wired and wireless connections. The PS3 supports the two most common forms of Wi-fi (called 802.11b and 802.11g). If you have obtained your wireless router recently, it may support the latest and fastest version of wireless, called 802.11n. If so, there's no need to worry as equipment built on this standard is usually backwards-compatible with its predecessors. If you plan to use a wired connection (if your PC is in the living room close to the TV and games console, for example) then the first thing you'll need to do is find or purchase a network cable. This is sometimes referred to as an Ethernet cable. The PS3's network socket is at the rear of the device. Plug in the cable and attach the other end to a spare port on your router, then switch on the console. If you want to use wireless, make sure there is no network cable linking the console and router. The PS3 uses a menu system called the Xross Media Bar (XMB), which you navigate through vertically and horizontally using the PS3 controller.
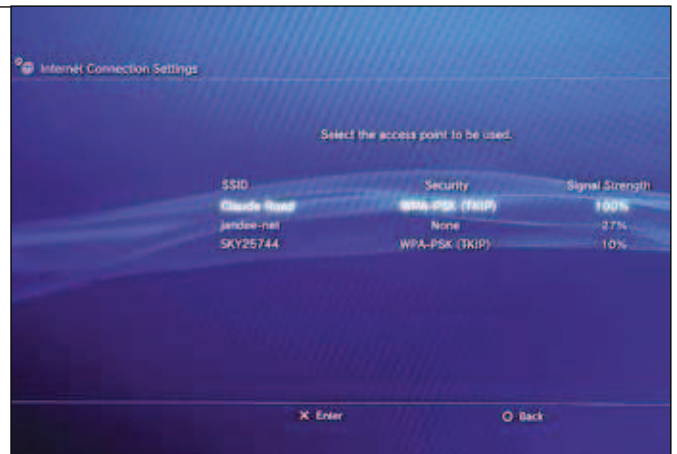

Step 2

Move horizontally through the menu until you reach Settings and then move vertically to the bottom of the list. Select Network Settings and press the blue X button on the controller. Now, using the same method, select Internet Connection Settings. If your PS3 is already online (so it can access games demos, for instance) you may see a warning message that continuing will disconnect your system. Select Yes and press X on the controller. A new screen will appear that gives you the option to choose either the Easy or Custom setting method. For most home networks, the Easy method should work fine. Use the directional keys on the controller to highlight this option. To continue, press the right directional button; the PS3 will then check your network. If it detects a cable, the PS3 will configure your network connection automatically. If not, you will be asked to choose between wired and wireless (choosing wired simply prompts you to plug in the cable). For this example, we're going to use wireless.

Step 3

Press the right directional key and you will now be asked how to find your network. Your home network will have the name you gave it when it was first set up (also called its **SSID**). If you know the SSID, select Enter Manually, but it's probably easier to choose Scan. Highlight this option and press the blue X button. After a short scan, the PS3 will display the names of all wireless networks within range. Highlight yours and press X again on the controller. The SSID of the network is displayed – press the right directional button until you are prompted to enter the password (or 'key') for your network. To enter it, you'll need the PS3's on-screen keyboard. Press X to activate it.
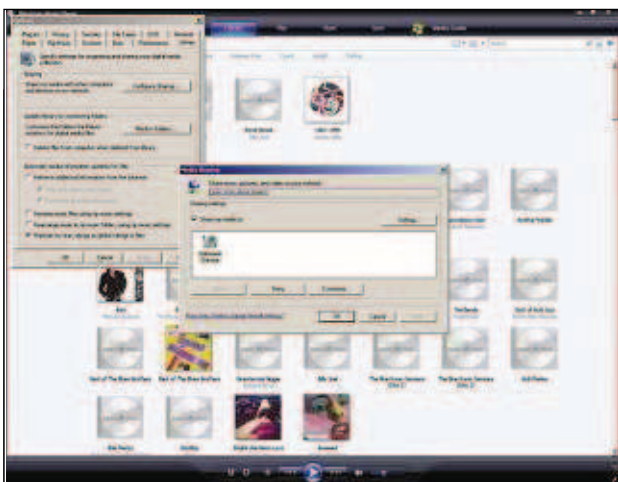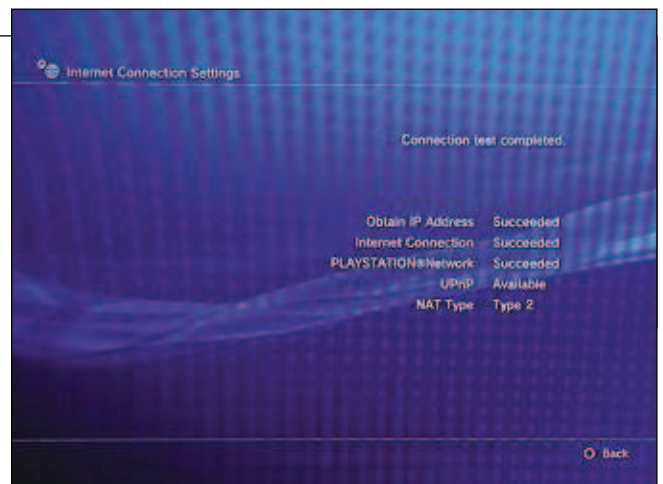

Step 4

You can enter the characters in your password using the PS3 controller. The directional buttons move around the keys while the R2 button switches between upper and lower-case characters – when the right character is highlighted, press the blue X button to enter it. The pink square key can be used to delete characters typed in error. When the whole password has been 'typed' in, press the Start button on the controller, followed by the right directional button. The console will check the network configuration and display a summary of your settings. Press X to confirm and then again to test the network connection.

Step 5

If the network password you entered is correct, you should see a 'Succeeded' message against the top three options (the first of which is 'Obtain **IP Address**'). Press the controller's red circle button to return to the console's XMB menu. Before we can begin to access media stored on the PC attached to our network, there a few options to check on the PC. First, you have to use Windows Media Player 11 (WMP11) as earlier versions of this software are not compatible with the PS3.
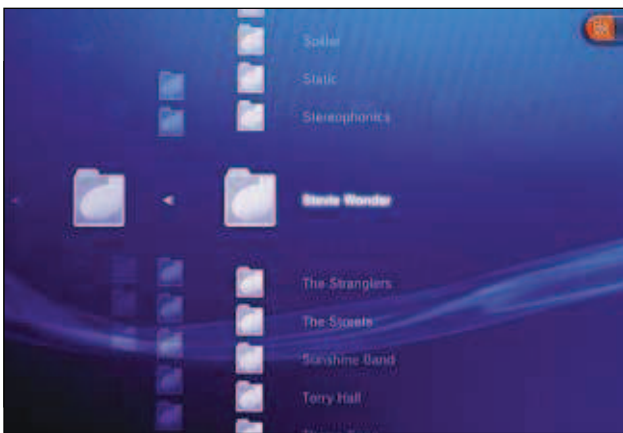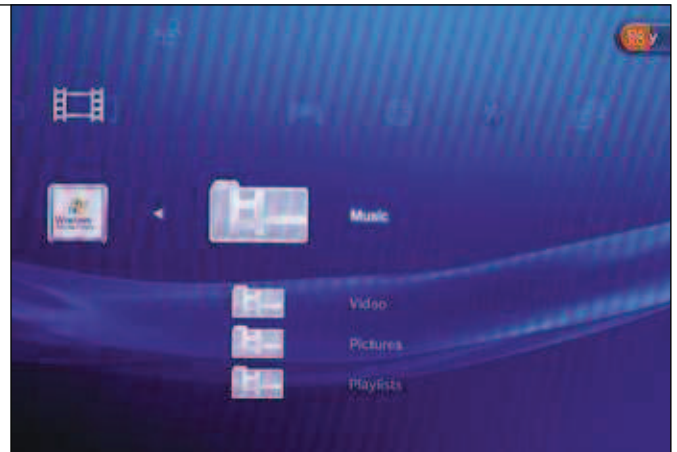
Step 6

WMP11 comes built into Windows Vista, but if you don't have it, download it from **www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/player/11/default.aspx**. Launch WMP11. We'll assume you already have WMP 11 installed and that you have already added music and videos to your library. Right-click on the WMP menu bar at the top and select Tools, followed by Options. In the **dialogue box** that appears, click the Library tab, followed by 'Configure sharing'. A new box appears: under 'Sharing settings', the PS3 will be displayed as Unknown Device. Make sure the box labelled 'Share my media to' is ticked, click the Unknown Device **icon** and then click Allow, followed by Apply and then OK. The process is exactly the same for Windows XP and Vista.

Step 7

You are now ready to start using the PS3 as a media streamer to your TV. Back at the console, use the XMB menu to navigate to either Music, Pictures or Video. You will note that the vertical menu beneath each option now includes a Windows icon for your PC, with its network name beside it. To access content from the PC, press the blue X button on the controller and move through the menus. The Music, Pictures and Video folders each have subfolders labelled Music, Video, Pictures and Playlists. It's a little confusing, since you can only access, say, files from the Music folder if you access them from the Music section of the XMB, even though the Music folder also appears under the Movies and Photos sections of the XMB, too.
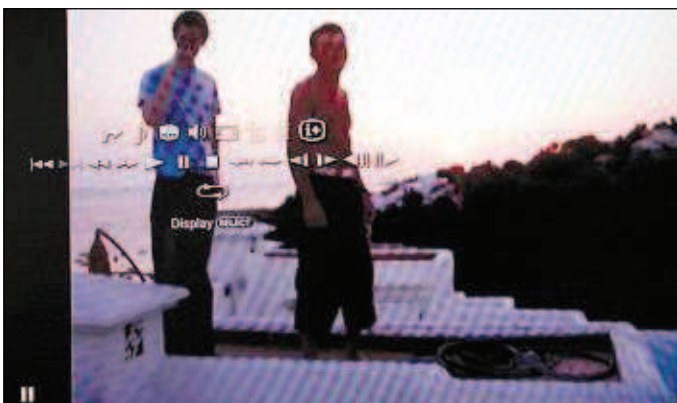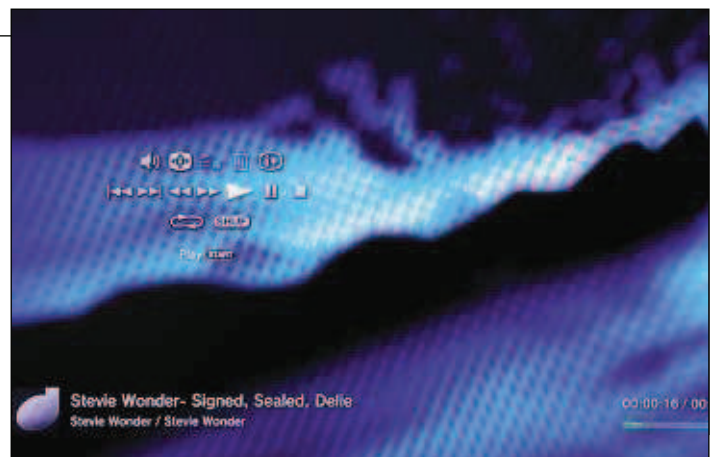

Step 8

Let's see how to stream some music to the TV from the PS3. Using the XMB, navigate horizontally to the Music option and then vertically to the icon for your PC. Press the blue X button, ensure the Music (not Video or Pictures) folder is highlighted and press X again. You can now browse your PC's music folder by any one of a number of criteria, including Genre, Albums and Playlists. Try selecting Albums with the X button. A vertical list of the albums stored in WMP11 is displayed. Press the X button first to select an album and then again to choose one of the tracks that appears vertically onscreen to start playing it.

Step 9

You can use the PS3 controller to perform various functions as the track plays: pressing the circle button stops the song and returns you to the track listing. The green triangle button activates the on-screen menu; move between the various icons to adjust the volume, add the track to a playlist, pause or move on to the next song on the album. The pink square button launches some interesting visuals to accompany the music and there are three from which to choose. Click the square button to scroll through them. The trigger buttons also have a role to play, with the L1 and R1 buttons moving between tracks and the L2 and R2 buttons fast-forwarding or rewinding an individual song.

Step 10

The controls are slightly different for video: press X to start a clip, R2 to fast-forward, L2 to rewind and L1 to restart the clip from the beginning. The triangle button still displays the on-screen menu, where you can select the screen mode (widescreen, for example) as well as pausing and using slow-motion controls. To end this workshop, we'll just mention the PlayStation Network; you'll find this option in the XMB. Set up an account here and you can get your hands on the latest playable demos for PS3 games, buy full versions and download them to the console, as well as pick up add-on packs to bring new features and levels to games and game-themed desktop background images for the console.