



*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at [nocco.org](http://nocco.org).*

**QUESTION:** I read your article on the iPad and wonder what other gadgets you have or know of that others may find useful.

**PC CLUB:** I do have several gadgets that "I can't live without". One of them is, or actually was, a Roku Player that plugged into my TV and was also connected to the Internet through a wireless connection. It lets you watch Netflix movies on the TV provided you have a Netflix account. The problem is that it stopped working and was out of warranty.

The cost to replace it was roughly \$100 and I had recently spotted a BluRay player that claimed that it had Netflix built in. The cost was \$119 which I thought was a good deal since it gave me BluRay and Netflix capability for an additional \$19. The only problem was that I needed to buy a wireless adapter for \$70. I could have also bought a BluRay player with built in wireless but that cost \$189. Here's where one of my favorite gadgets came in.

Belkin makes an Ethernet Powerline Adapter (see <http://bit.ly/belkinadapter>) which I happened to have a pair of, so I used them to get the Internet from my router to my BluRay player through the household AC power lines. I couldn't use an Ethernet cable since the router was too far from the player. These Belkin devices are handy to get an Internet connection where wireless is not possible. You just plug one into the AC near the router, hook a cable between it and the router and place the other one where you need an Internet connection. The device works with both Wireless-N and Wireless-G routers.

Another of my favorite devices came about by accident. I was having some difficulty connecting my iPad to my wireless router when I was outside on my rear patio. I was using a Wireless-G router and decided to try a Wireless-N since the range was better. I went with a Netgear WNR3500L (see <http://bit.ly/netgear3500>) which resolved the problem. However, the router also had a USB port which allowed me to connect a USB external hard drive. This hard drive not only is accessible from anyone on our home network, but from anyone with an Internet connection. I can now access that drive from anywhere. The drive can have folders that are password protected or folders with public access allowing me to easily share large files with anyone.

I was using a CD changer connected to my stereo to play music throughout the house when I suddenly became frustrated with it. Changing out the CDs to vary the music was time consuming

and I knew there was a better way. If only I could play music from my PC through the stereo I would have a better setup. That's when I discovered the Logitech Music Anywhere (see <http://amzn.to/musicanywhere>) which allowed me to do just that. I can now setup my PC as a jukebox using either Windows Media Player or iTunes.

I think we all suffer from having too many remotes for our TVs, BluRay players, etc. I found a neat device called Osiris (not to be confused with the Greek god of the underworld) universal remote. You can find it at such places as Amazon. It can program up to 20 different components with up to 40 pages of LCD screens. It also has a backlight for those who like to operate in the dark. It also has an RF mode which means that it doesn't have to work with line-of-site so it can go through walls. You have to have an RF receiver called a PowerBlaster which can be purchased in a bundle with the remote for \$80 at Amazon. Search for URC RFS200 PowerPak Bundle.

Another of my favorite devices in my DVD/VHS combo drive which allows me to copy my VHS tapes to DVDs. As you know, VHS tapes deteriorate rapidly. I saw a Toshiba combo drive at a local Costco for \$149.

If you have a favorite device go to my web site and let me know. Also go to my Web site and click the Contac Me menu to send me a comment or a question you'd like answered. You'll also find the archives of my articles there as well - ***Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View my Web site at [www.edwardns.com](http://www.edwardns.com).***