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  Video cameras
  Projectors
  Nokia?
  CeBIT 2002

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  new stuff

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  MP3/Audio
  digital
cameras
  game devices

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  mobile phones

**Hardware**
  cards
  desktops
  laptops
  monitors
  networking
  peripherals
  printers
  projectors
  scanners
  storage

## News

**Today's headlines**

# Local firm eyes wireless market

*By Oo Gin Lee , Straits Times*
*6 Sep 2001*

A HOMEGROWN start-up is gunning for a slice of the lucrative US$350 million (S$611 million) wireless-networking business.

RFNet Technologies, one of the companies spun off by Nanyang Technological University's Network Technology Research Centre, will start selling its high-end equipment for this market next month, taking on established players like Cisco Systems and 3Com.

Mr Deric Lee, managing director of the six-month-old RFNet, told The Straits Times about its strategy: 'Our products will cost about 30-per-cent less, and they'll have extra features.'

The equipment will be water- resistant and can also be deployed over greater distances.

Wireless networking, or wireless local area network (LAN), lets computer users connect to each other and to the Internet without cables or wires.

Research firm IDC last week estimated that sales of wireless LAN equipment in Singapore would grow fivefold, from about US$5 million last year to more than US$25 million in 2005.

Mr Simon Chew, IDC's senior analyst in Internet Protocol and broadband equipment, said sales should be even higher for the Asia-Pacific region, excluding Japan. He expects them to increase from US$45 million last year to US$350 million by 2005.

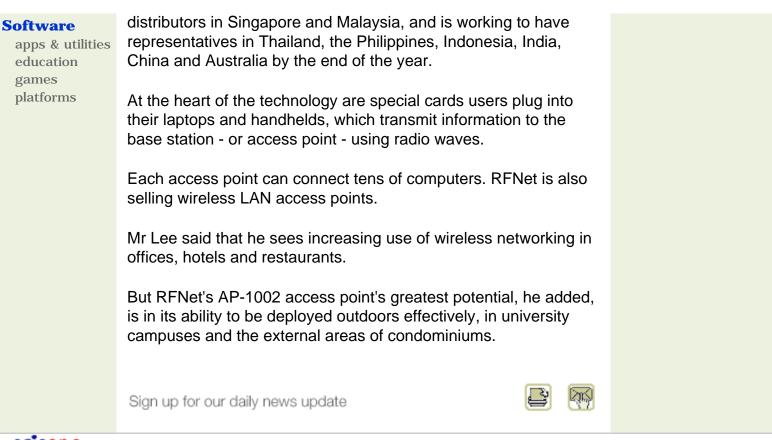To tap this growing market, RFNet has already appointed

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- May 2001
- June 2001
- July 2001
- August 2001
- September 2001
- October 2001
- November 2001
- December 2001
- Jan 2002
- Feb 2002
- Mar 2002
- Apr 2002

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distributors in Singapore and Malaysia, and is working to have representatives in Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, China and Australia by the end of the year.

At the heart of the technology are special cards users plug into their laptops and handhelds, which transmit information to the base station - or access point - using radio waves.

Each access point can connect tens of computers. RFNet is also selling wireless LAN access points.

Mr Lee said that he sees increasing use of wireless networking in offices, hotels and restaurants.

But RFNet's AP-1002 access point's greatest potential, he added, is in its ability to be deployed outdoors effectively, in university campuses and the external areas of condominiums.

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