Home Network Visualization Project

As computer networks move out of the workplace and into the home, difficulties may arise when users configure, use, and troubleshoot network technologies originally designed for expert systems administrators.

In the paper “The Work To Make a Home Network Work,” the authors examined the use and maintenance of complex computer and audiovisual networks in domestic settings. In their study, they found that home network users devote a significant amount of time to network configuration and maintenance.

Many of the people interviewed for this study had difficulties with network troubleshooting, in part because they did not have accurate mental models of the home network’s infrastructure (and thus did not consider some crucial pieces of the network when troubleshooting).

We believe that being able to visualize what a network looks like (and what is going on in the network) would help people be able to more easily maintain their home networks.

Although many network visualization tools are already in the marketplace, these tools are primarily aimed toward systems administrators who have a deep understanding of networking.

Right now, we are in the process of developing a piece of network visualization software for use by home users who may not understand networking as well as experts, and are looking for a few good people to join this project.

**Person 1:** You’re a Photoshop whiz who can create some high-resolution icons for use in the software.

**Person 2:** You’re a skilled Java GUI programmer. Experience with *Piccolo* is a plus. Details of your programming tasks are TBD.