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Prepare SD card for Wifi on Headless Pi

I need to SSH my Pi over wifi but because it is a model A board (using a usb hub is not possible - ever) and I have no ethernet, i can't configure the Pi to connect to my secured wifi network. I want to have the SD card plugged into my laptop and I want to edit a file with the wifi configuration information in it so my Pi will connect to my network automatically at start-up so I can then SSH it to get control. I know how to enable SSH on a headless system thanks to [this answer](#).

Edit. Ive been searching around and I'm wondering if I'm able to just edit the file `/etc/network/interfaces` while the SD card is in my PC and put in all the network ssid, psk and wlan0 stuff in it. Will this work? Thanks

raspbian wireless setup wifi headless

edited Apr 13 at 12:56



Community ♦

1

asked Oct 22 '13 at 8:06



11chubby11

1,847 2 16 28

You are faced with quite a predicament there. I would suggest using a USB LAN temporarily to connect over SSHS. Most drivers are included for those. Insert your WiFi and then [follow this answer to set up your WiFi on the Pi](#). After wards you reboot, unplugging the LAN and boot in using Wifi. It should auto connect within a few minutes. – [ppumkin](#) Oct 22 '13 at 8:29

2 Low cost way to set up is to use a [usb-serial](#) adapter to connect to the serial on the GPIO header. You don't even need to enable ssh to do this – [John La Rooy](#) Oct 23 '13 at 5:36

see my answer [\[here\]\[1\]](#) for an alternative method [\[1\]](#): raspberrypi.stackexchange.com/a/31397/30719 – [memebrain](#) May 9 '15 at 21:30

8 Answers

There are some great answers here, but many are out of date. Since May 2016, Raspbian has been able to copy wifi details from `/boot/wpa_supplicant.conf` into `/etc/wpa_supplicant/wpa_supplicant.conf` to automatically configure wireless network access:

If a `wpa_supplicant.conf` file is placed into the `/boot/` directory, this will be moved to the `/etc/wpa_supplicant/` directory the next time the system is booted, overwriting the network settings; this allows a Wifi configuration to be preloaded onto a card from a Windows or other machine that can only see the boot partition.

— The latest update to Raspbian - Raspberry Pi

Since the `/boot` partition is accessible by any computer with an SD card reader, wifi configuration is now much simpler.

A skeleton `wpa_supplicant.conf` file can be as little as:

```
network={
  ssid="YOUR_SSID"
  psk="YOUR_PASSWORD"
  key_mgmt=WPA-PSK
}
```

Also, since November 2016, [SSH is disabled on Raspbian by default](#). However, it is very easy to enable:

For headless setup, SSH can be enabled by placing a file named 'ssh', without any extension, onto the boot partition of the SD card. When the Pi boots, it looks for the 'ssh' file; if it is found, SSH is enabled and then the file is deleted. The content of the file doesn't