

# More Ethernet Ports via USB??

by Paul Cook

Suppose you want another Ethernet port. Maybe you want to turn your laptop or iMac into a router or Internet Gateway and you need an extra Ethernet port. Or maybe you blew your Ethernet port and you don't want to pay for a motherboard replacement. What then? One option might be to use a USB to Ethernet Adapter. Until recently, due to lack of drivers this was not an option for Mac users. However thanks to Daniel Sumorok, there are now drivers available for many units under the GPL license. (GPL is one of the many so-called "Open Source" licenses.)

Instructions and download links for the necessary drivers can be found at the following URLs made available by Peter Sichel, with Sustainable Softworks, a Mac networking software company:

[http://www.sustworks.com/site/news\\_usb\\_ethernet.html](http://www.sustworks.com/site/news_usb_ethernet.html)

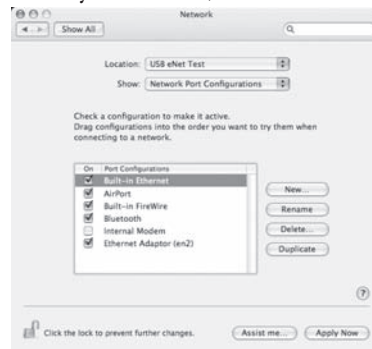
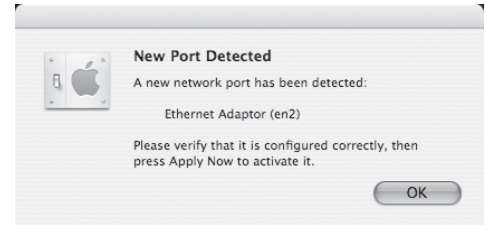
<http://www.sustworks.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Sustworks/USB-To-EthernetAdaptors>

Warning: While this worked for me, there are some warnings on the above links. Read them. Neither NWOU, nor Passages, nor I assume responsibility if you screw something up.

If you already have an existing USB to Ethernet adapter, give it a try and see if it works. Otherwise, if you plan to buy one, I'd strongly suggest a model from the list of compatible devices, which currently is as follows:

If you order from CDW or another online supplier, you can probably have your choice. However, USB adapters are not so widely stocked that you are likely to have

a large variety at most retail stores. The Linksys unit seems to be the most widely available. (Be careful, not all Linksys models work.)



USB Network Adaptor	Driver			
Brand	Model	USB	Pegasus	AX8817X
3COM	3C460B	1.1	X	
Belkin	F5D5050	1.1	X	
D-Link	DSB-650	1.1	X	
D-Link	DSB-650TX	1.1	X	
D-Link	DUB-E100	2.0		X
D-Link	DUN-E100	2.0		X
Farallon	Netline PN796-650	1.1	X	
Kingston	KNU101TX	1.1	X	
LinkSys	USB10TX	1.1	X	
LinkSys	USB100TX	1.1	X	
LinkSys	USB200M	2.0		X
NetGear	FA120	2.0		X

Installation was pretty straightforward. Download and install the software. Connect the Ethernet cable to the adapter and plug it in. Restart.

When you open the Network Preference pane, you should get a "New Port Detected" alert. This is a good thing. Click OK and proceed.

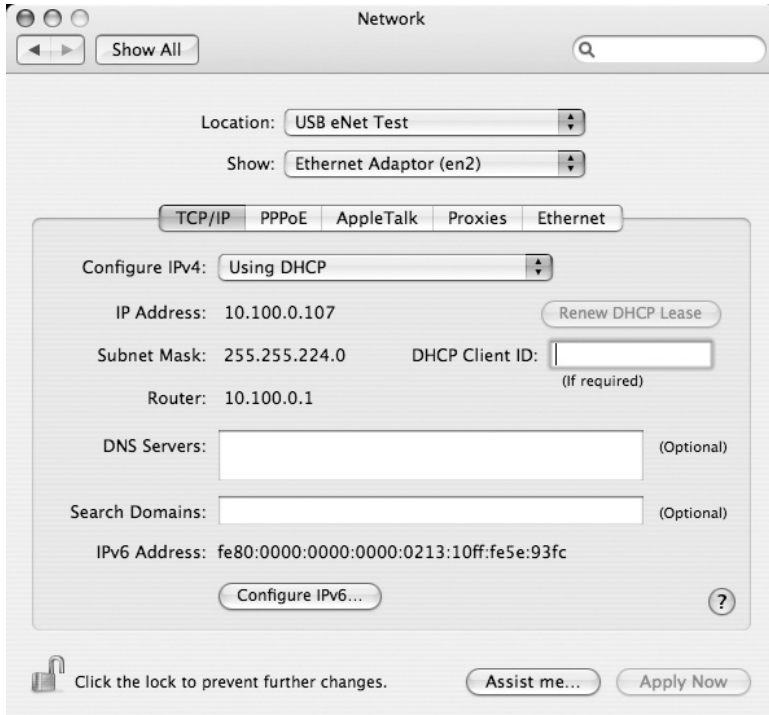
Once inside the network port configuration pane, you should see the new adapter. (In the illustration, Ethernet Adaptor (en2) was my USB network adapter. Yours may have a different name. You also may want to turn off the ports that you are not using.

The article suggests that "most of the popular low cost adapters fall into one of" the categories of chip sets supported by the two basic drivers. However, my personal experience was the exception. The first two units I tried were not on the list and they did not work. So unless you are feeling lucky, I wouldn't buy one not already on the working list. The LinkSys USB200M was the first unit I tried on the list and it did seem to work.

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If you are on a network with DHCP, a quick check should give you the warm and fuzzies about everything working.



*Network Preference Pane – DHCP check*

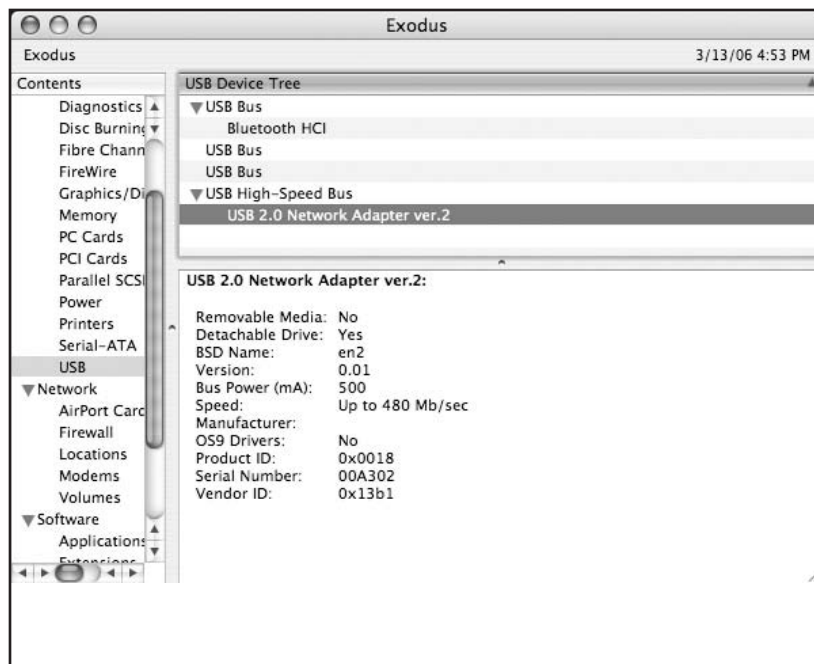
If you were going to set up a mission critical network, I'd strongly recommend more testing before deployment. I didn't do days of testing, but the web surfing and email downloading that I did do worked just fine. (Far as I can tell I got all the spam that was intended for me. ;-). So the drivers and the adapter seem to work.

If things don't work, you might try looking in your Apple System Profiler to see if the device shows up in the list of USB devices. The product description may change, depending on what the manufacturers chose to call it, but you should see something that claims to be a network adapter, Ethernet, 10/100, etc. connected to the USB port. If not, recheck your connections. If you do and it still doesn't work, verify that you have a supported device and try a restart. If that still doesn't work, try the old stand-by, "Read the Instructions" ;-)

Note: Assuming the adapter uses one of the supported chips, support for additional devices can be added by editing the plist inside

the appropriate driver package as described in the directions in the links. In fact, there are already quite a bit more devices in the plist than on the above table. However, my experience leads me to suspect that most of the compatible devices, that you are likely to encounter, have already been added. Still, if you have one sitting around and you want to try it... 🐼

*Editor's note – Thank you to Paul Cook. We can count on him to turn in interesting TidBits for Passages. This is one he gave to us back in April.*



*Apple System Profiler*