**New Horizons Data Communications Center**

Jack Mayer, [www.jackdanmayer.com](http://www.jackdanmayer.com)
Copyright © 2011 John Mayer. All rights reserved.

Previous articles discussed communications technology useful to an RVer. You might want to refer back to those articles for some general background and terminology. You can find them on the New Horizons website here <**add a link>**.

New Horizons is the only manufacturer I am aware of that offers a comprehensive set of communications packages as a factory installed option. Having “best of breed” technology for staying connected to the Internet and cellular system while enjoying your RV is critical to most people in today’s world. Having it installed at the factory means correct installation, easier routing of wires and availability of power where you need it. It also ensures that all components work well together.

There are two packages that, when combined, cover all your communications needs. The first package is the *Data Communications Center*. The Data Communications Center provides a complete pre-installed package for Internet access in your New Horizons RV, much like you have access in a residential environment. Because the mobile environment is very dynamic, the package permits you to connect to the Internet in a number of different ways: through a cellular USB aircard, through an RV Park or public WiFi hotspot, or through DSL / cable if you are parked where these are available.

These various connection types are managed by the [WiFiRanger](https://www.wifiranger.com/our-downloads) intelligent mobile router which is the heart of the *Communications Center*. Inside the RV you have your personal wireless LAN – just like in a house. This allows all of your wireless devices to connect to “your” wireless network. Your laptop computers, wireless/wired printer, iPad, iPod Touch, Android tablet or Smartphone connect to *your* network, which is then connected to the Internet through one of the available connection types supported by the WiFiRanger. A key benefit of having your own local network is that your devices can be configured one time to connect to the network, and share your wireless (or wired) printer, and network storage. Devices do not have to be re-configured to connect to new networks as you move locations.

The [WifiRanger](http://wifiranger.net/) (WFR) is a wireless router. Like home routers it provides for a local network for your use, with both wired and wireless capabilities. What distinguishes it from conventional home routers is its ability to keep you connected to the Internet in a mobile environment, as well as a fixed environment like a house. It does this through the use of cellular aircards, and through its ability to connect to and repeat public WiFi networks.

From an RVers perspective one of the most important aspects of the Communications Center is the ability to capture and repeat RV Park WiFi signals as a part of your local RV network. The ability of the WFRBoost Mobile component to do this from a great distance solves many of the connection issues encountered in RV Parks that have a WiFi network.

**What comes with the *Communications Center* option?**

The *Communications Center* option includes the WiFiRanger Pro with WFRBoost Mobile capability, a low-profile cellular antenna for better aircard connections, AC and DC power connections, and internal Ethernet wiring. This package provides “*best in class”* Internet access capabilities for your New Horizons RV. With the use of a cellular aircard you can even access the Internet from your tow vehicle while driving.

The Communications Center is located in the closet above the monitor panels. The WiFiRanger router and its power connections are located there. In addition, DC and AC power outlets are provided for customer-installed equipment like network storage, cellular amplifiers or other components.

The WFRBoost Mobile radio and antenna is located on the roof of the RV and is responsible for connecting to WiFi networks. Because it has a powerful separate radio and antenna located high on the roof it can connect to networks that would otherwise be impossible to connect to with your laptop alone. The WFRBoost component is connected directly to the WiFiRanger router via Ethernet cable, which also supplies power to it.

The included cellular antenna is designed to increase your cellular aircard signal and is also located on the roof of the RV. The antenna cable is routed through the roof and is located near the router for connection to your cellular aircard.

The package includes one Ethernet line from the router to the entertainment center. Additional lines can be specified – typically these would be run to the outside utility hookup center and the bedroom TV area.

All of the supplied communications components run on DC power, so the communications capabilities are constantly available – even while driving, or boondocking where AC power would not be present.

The WiFiRanger router can connect to the Internet via:

* 3G cellular modem
* 4G cellular modem (Verizon LTE or Sprint WiMax)
* WiFi (called WiFi for WAN)
* Satellite
* DSL
* Cable modem

You can have a cellular aircard and a WiFi connection via the WFRBoost simultaneously. You can specify the active connection path to the Internet and how to manage the connections if the primary connection fails. This *failover* capability will help ensure that you maintain a connection no matter what the circumstances.

All the necessary components are preinstalled and configured for you. All you have to do is add a compatible cellular aircard and you are ready to go. All your data needs can be handled by the Data Communications Center, but what about enhancing voice communications via cellular? In the next article we will discuss the optional package that handles that aspect of communications on the road.