

FC4 on Dell Inspiron 1200 with NetGear WAG511 Dual-Band Wireless Card

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Fedora/2005-10/4284.html>

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To: "For users of Fedora Core releases, " <fedora-list@redhat.com>

All right: now I'm not asking for advice. Instead, I'm offering it--free and "open-source," of course.

The Dell Inspiron 1200 /does/ work with Fedora Core 4. Moreover, one /can/ install a wireless connection, and with ease.

Here's a quick HOWTO:

1. Install Fedora Core 4 as either Personal Desktop or Workstation--it shouldn't matter which. Anaconda will auto-detect a generic VESA video driver--run with that. But change the monitor to a generic LCD with 1024 by 768 resolution at the earliest opportunity.
2. Connect directly to the Internet using the built-in Ethernet interface.
3. Reboot and go through the first-time routine. Don't sweat the no-sound issue; you'll fix that later. You might get your chance to select the proper monitor option with this step.
4. If you intend using any package manager other than yum, now's the time to pull it in. I used smart myself. But yum will do. If you want another package manager, you'll need to pull that in using yum, and set up whatever repo it's on.
5. Using yum or your favorite package manager, update all channels and then update all programs presently on your machine. This might take forty-five minutes, depending on how much you've installed. You /must/ get the latest version of the kernel, because madwifi (more later) does not have a kernel module for the kernel version on the FC4 release disks.
6. Now open the Volume Control. Select Edit -> Preferences. Make sure at least that the following tracks are visible: PCM and External Amplifier. Now turn External Amplifier ON and run PCM to MAX. You should have sound at once.

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7. Now install kernel-module-madwifi for your version of the kernel.
8. Shut down your laptop.
9. Physically insert a Netgear WAG511 at this time, and /disconnect/ your direct Ethernet connection.
10. Restart your laptop.
11. Go to Desktop->System Settings->Network. If all goes well, you should see a new device called "ath0" in the Hardware tab.
12. Set up a New Wireless Connection. Get the SSID (and, if necessary, your WEP key) from your router. You'll probably need your regular desktop to gain access to this. Then /check/ the box that says, "Activate this connection when computer starts."
13. Highlight and edit the Ethernet Connection. /Uncheck/ the box labeled "Activate this connection when computer starts."
14. Shut down and restart your computer. If all goes well, your card should light up with two LED's (they'll flash at one cycle every two seconds), all services should start without interruption, and you should have full network connectivity.

Naturally, to connect to another wireless network with another SSID, you'll have to change the Wireless Connection settings. Other than that, you shouldn't have to "mess" with anything.

With any luck, you can have this done in one day.

Many thanks to the Fedora Forum for the key piece of information about installing the required kernel module, to the MADWifi Project for building a kernel module that works, to the keepers of the Livna repository for making this readily available, to Atheros Communications for their unstinting cooperation, and to all the good folks at the Fedora Project for providing everything else that I needed.

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