

(tech pioneers)

Lo says IPTV networks, popular in Europe, may soon take on cable and satellite in the U.S.

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**SELINA LO**  
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## The Wizards of Wireless

LOSE THE LEASH. CUT THE WIRES. SO GO the mantras. But for those still frustrated by the instability and limited range of home wireless networks, Ethernet cables remain a common alternative. That presents a problem, though.

“People don’t like dealing with the hassles of cables,” says Ruckus CEO Selina Lo. “It’s just one rung above plumbing.” So Ruckus, a California-based start-up with 57 employees, came up with a better idea: refine wireless networking so that you can more efficiently fling high-speed access around your home without having to snake wires around doorways and under desks. Ruckus routers use hardware and

software that direct signals around obstacles, so that wireless works smoothly even in a large home, and even for video, for which stability and speed are vital.

Streaming video without having frames freeze or an occasionally garbled picture requires a network that sends packets of data consistently, without interruption. Ruckus’ range is three times that of other wireless networks, and for streaming the latest *Lonely Girl*, it’s both swift and stable. While appliances like microwaves or phones can interfere with traditional wireless networks, Ruckus’ technology overcomes those problems by rerouting signals along an unobstructed path. “We’re making wi-fi a utility, rather than a very specialized kind of network for computers,” Lo says. Because wireless remains a novelty for many American consumers, though, the company remains little known in the U.S.

Ruckus’ technology also enables Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) services to stream television and video around a home. An alternative to cable and satellite TV that has barely left a mark in the U.S., IPTV is popular in Europe and Asia, where Ruckus partners with service



Ruckus’ wireless networks boast a range three times that of competitors’

providers. Lo says IPTV will gain converts in the U.S. “Right now we’re slaves to cable and satellite TV,” she says, “where you need to wait weeks for someone to check your wiring and then install cables. With IPTV you just buy a subscription, and it all works wirelessly.”

Next up for Lo’s company, which launched in June 2004, is creating networks that will enable video streaming in places like coffee shops, airports and train stations. Eventually, the company hopes to expand its U.S. presence, having already landed partners in Belgium, Hong Kong, Ireland, Estonia and Slovenia. Networking products become commoditized so quickly that nobody bothers with innovation, says Lo. “It takes a bunch of fools like us to say these products have got to be better. Innovation is worth something even for a commodity.” —J.C.