### by Alan J. Pierce, EdD

**D-Link SharePort Go DIR-506L** (MSRP $89.99)

The D-link SharePort Go does so many different things that it can best be described as a digital Swiss Army knife. All the tools that SharePort Go gives you are hidden inside a 4" by 3" X ½" rectangular prism plastic box. See photo. Instead of separate blades it has receptacles for the wires that will let you do different types of internet sharing and file streaming. The unit comes with a short Ethernet cable, recharging wire, 8GB USB Flash Drive, and a Li-ion battery.

The instruction sheet gives you a step by step procedure to perform all of its functions. The instructions show you how to engage password protection to keep prying eyes out of your Wi-Fi network. D-link indicates that the SharePort Go can perform all of the following tasks.

1. A battery powered recharger that can give you extra juice to run your cellphone when an electrical outlet is not available.
2. A wireless media streamer that can stream hours of movies, photos, music, or even work files to 5 different Wi-Fi enabled devices at the same time. The media that you stream is not directly stored on the SharePort Go but rather on a USB Flash Drive or external hard drive plugged into the SharePort.
3. A free SharePort Go app is available at the Apple App store and the Google Play store that makes this device compatible with Apple and Android Smartphones and tablets.
4. Not only can you stream from the SharePort Go you can also increase the temporary storage capacity of your Wi-Fi enabled devices by directly saving files to a USB flash drive plugged into your SharePort Go.

5. It is a wireless router that can convert a wired modem connection of a hotel room into your own secure Wi-Fi hotspot.
6. It can also function as a Wi-Fi network extender that can wirelessly increase the coverage of an existing network.

Testing included putting it through its paces streaming to an Apple iPad, Samsung Galaxy Smartphone, and a Samsung 10.1 Tab. Let us take a point by point look at how the SharePort Go did on this testing:

**Yes** (1 Charger) It certainly can work as a charger. However, draining its battery to recharge your cellphone will prevent it from performing its other functions.

**Yes & No** (2 Streaming your files) - I placed 3 full length movies onto the 8GB Flash Drive that came with the SharePort Go. I then downloaded the free apps from the Apple and Google stores. I tested its streaming ability by streaming a different movie to each device at the same time. Playback was good. However I did receive a few "can't connect to target router" messages when I tried to switch from movie watching to working with other material stored on its flash drive. I was also able to move files from the flash drive attached to the Shareport Go app's favorites folder for viewing when the SharePort Go is not turned on. When an external hard drive was connected instead of the flash drive I often received many "can't connect to target router" messages.

**Yes** & **No** (3) The Android and Apple App was available at both stores. At one point after already playing a number of files I kept getting "can't connect to target router" messages on my Samsung Tab. Restarting the Tab solved this problem. For the most part running three different videos from the flash drive

## Hardware Overview
### Front/Top



| # | Component | State | Charging | Not Charging |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Power LED | Flashing green | | High Battery Capacity |
| | | Solid Green | Battery full charged when device on | |
| | | Solid Amber | Battery in charging | |
| | | Solid Red | | Low Battery Capacity |
| | | Flashing Red | | Need to charge device as soon as possible |
| | | Off | Battery full charged when device off | Device Off |
| 2 | WPS Button | Pressing the WPS button allows additional devices to connect securely and automatically. | | |
| 3 | Reset Button | Pressing the Reset button restores the DIR-506L to its original factory default settings. | | |
| 4 | USB Port | Connect a USB flash drive to configure the wireless settings using SharePort™ Mobile and SharePort™ Web File Access. Both allow you to share a USB or a storage device with your local network. | | |
| 5 | USB LED Indicator | Flashing Green | Connect to USB (SharePort is not ready) | |
| | | Solid Green | Connect to USB (SharePort is ready) | |
| | | Off | Remove USB | |
| 6 | Ethernet LED Indicator | Solid Green | Normal use: Ethernet connection is established | |
| | | Flashing Green | Normal use: data packet transferred via Ethernet | |
| | | Off | Ethernet is not connected | |
| 7 | Wi-Fi LED Indicator | Solid Green | Wi-Fi on | |
| | | Flashing Green | Data packet transferred via WiFi | |
| | | Fast Flashing Green | WPS mode for WiFi Client | |
| | | Off | Wi-Fi off | |

ran smoothly. However, when I used it with the same personal devices with a 500GB backup drive that I connected to the SharePort Go I experienced frequent "can't connect to target router" messages.

**Yes** & **No** (4 download and upload files) I was able to download files and video from the flash drive that was plugged into the SharePort Go; but I was not able to save files from my Smartphone or the tablets to the flash drive.

**Yes** (5 as a hotel room wireless router) I just plugged in the modem wire into the SharePort Go and it worked perfectly. The important point is not only did it turn a wired internet connection into a wireless one; it turned it into a secure Wi-Fi network that I could connect multiple devices.

**Yes** (6 Wi-Fi Extender) It did a great job extending an existing Wi-Fi connection. You need to realize that in this mode you don't have access to the flash drive you have plugged into your SharePort Go. However, when I tried to switch the unit out from its extender function I ran into a brick wall. Even the "factory" reset button on the unit didn't seem to turn off the extender function.

### Kudos to D-Link

At the D-Link Website (http://www.dlink.com/ca/en/support/contact-support) I described the problem by filling out a form on the website. They emailed me the solution. It seems that a quick press of the reset button only resets the unit's name and password. To reset the entire unit to its original factory settings the reset button must be pressed and held down for at least 10 seconds with the unit running. It would have been helpful if the install guide mentioned that the reset would need to be held for a length of time to reset the unit to its factory configuration.

### The Final Word

The Yes and No's will give you a good idea of the SharePort Go's strengths and weaknesses. I was surprised that I could not access its flash drive from my computer without loading new software from D-Link. Since it would be just as easy to plug the flash drive directly into the computer in the first place, this lack of access wasn't significant. To see the SharePort Go in action watch this YouTube video at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8UY-TxYetI&feature=player_embedded

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