

Bluetooth Security with the LaserChamp and BlueSnap

Issue: I've heard of security problems with Bluetooth on Windows. What are the security implications of a LaserChamp wireless (Bluetooth) connection to your BlueSnap adapter?

Bluetooth security issues have been far over emphasized in the media due to a lack of understanding of some very basic Bluetooth principles. This document will briefly outline basic security issues with Bluetooth connections for the wireless LaserChamp and BlueSnap adapter.

The commonly known Bluetooth 'hacks' such as "bluesnarfing" and "bluebugging" that have been widely publicized are related to having a device in 'Discovery' enabled. On all Bluetooth devices there is a control to Enable/Disable 'Discovery' mode. When Discovery is enabled it allows other Bluetooth devices to "see" that device. The simple way to prevent any such problems is to disable the 'Discovery' mode on the device.

Discovery mode is NOT required for the LaserChamp Bluetooth scanner to function on any of the platforms that SerialIO.com supports.

With regard to the BlueSnap USB adapter security is even better. The BlueSnap is designed to communicate with Windows by presenting itself as an RS-232 serial (COM) port to the Windows operating system. As such, Windows will operate with the BlueSnap as if it were just an additional COM port with no Bluetooth drivers required. Because the BlueSnap has the Bluetooth stack (communication protocol) embedded, it does not require that the Windows Bluetooth stack be enabled for the Bluetooth connection between the BlueSnap and LaserChamp to function.

In addition to this basic Bluetooth security feature, the BlueSnap USB will only ever look for connections to Bluetooth devices when it has not been "paired" (a term used to describe how two Bluetooth devices are 'married'). Pairing occurs only when the SerialMagic software initiates it. Once the BlueSnap has been paired, it will only ever look to connect to the device that it has been paired with.

In summary, with regard to insuring secure connectivity to the Windows machine, the design of BlueSnap insures an extremely high level of security, arguably equal to, perhaps even better than with a cable.