

Application Note

Using Ethernet based USB Servers
With SBIG USB Based Cameras
November 4, 2009

Introduction

One of the common complaints regarding USB based cameras in Astronomy is that the 15 foot length of the USB cable is often too short to route from the computer through the mount up to the camera. In addition many folks like to have the computer in the warm house with the telescope out in the yard and there 15 feet definitely isn't enough.

Fortunately there is now a relatively inexpensive way to lengthen the run between the computer and the camera using peripherals designed to serve USB devices over Ethernet. This Application Note describes one of those devices that has been tested and shown to work with SBIG USB based cameras.

Quatech USBN-500W Wireless Device Server

The Quatech USBN-500W is a wired (Ethernet) or wireless (IEEE802.11b/g) USB Device Server that works well with SBIG cameras. You can buy it directly from the Quatech website (www.quatech.com) for under \$200. It allows you to connect a single USB peripheral (like an SBIG camera) to the Ethernet port of your computer and then provides drivers that make the USB peripheral look as though it's connected directly to your computer via USB.

With Ethernet connectivity it's not problem to have runs of several hundred feet between the computer and the server, eliminating the 15 foot USB limit.

One last requirement with SBIG cameras and that is that you must use this on a 32 bit version of Windows with our 32 bit Classic Driver Checker. Our 64 bit drivers are not compatible with the Quatech unit. Also note that the Keyspan units, while popular, have been tested with our cameras and found to not be compatible so please stick with the Quatech unit.