

Broadcom N Router Gets Draft 2.0 Certification

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The news comes as other vendors, such as D-Link, also began rolling out firmware updates to their 802.11n gear last week, bringing them up to Draft 2.0 specifications as well.

By achieving Draft 2.0 certification, Broadcom's router and client reference designs are now promised to work seamlessly with all other current and future Wi-Fi certified 802.11n products.

The body that oversees certification, the Wi-Fi Alliance, has also selected Broadcom's dual-band (2.4GHz + 5GHz) router and client reference designs to be part of its 802.11n interoperability testing environment for current and future Wi-Fi products, the company said.

Since the approval of Draft 2.0 last March, which was passed with an overall vote of 83.4 percent, the Wi-Fi Alliance has moved ahead at a steady pace with certification - something that wasn't happening a year

ago when debates and inside squabbling about the spec almost derailed its development.

Today, with the passing of Draft 2.0 (and Draft 2.0-compliant gear), the Wi-Fi Alliance has come out with a spec that it claims will be upgradeable to the final version of the 802.11n standard. That version is on track to be published in early 2009, with a final draft spec (Draft 3.0) preceding it later this year.

When compared with 802.11b and 802.11g, 802.11n touts advantages such as much higher maximum speeds - as fast as 200 Mbps under ideal conditions - as well as greater range.

802.11n gear also uses what's known as a multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) antenna system that allows wireless routers to process spatially different signals at the same time. Unlike 802.11b and g, 802.11n gear can also operate on the 5GHz frequency in addition to 2.4GHz.

"Wi-Fi certification is the most significant landmark in the transition to 802.11n thus far," said Kevin Mukai, senior product line manager for Broadcom's WLAN line of business, in a statement today.

"Most Wi-Fi users want to know that their wireless products will work together. Wi-Fi certification provides a measure of confidence, giving consumers and businesses additional peace of mind as they upgrade their wireless networks to get additional speed and reliability, while ensuring compatibility with existing products."

Currently, Broadcom's Intensi-fi chipsets are one of the leading 802.11n solutions shipping in routers, PCs, DSL gateways, and video/media adapters. Broadcom-based products from Linksys, Netgear, Buffalo, and Asustek now represent more than half of the 802.11n equipment sold in the U.S from April 2006 through March 2007, according to the NPD

Group's retail tracking service. The company's 802.11n technology is also included in wireless-enabled notebooks from Acer, Dell, HP, and Lenovo.

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