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Netgear is living in a Metamaterial world

By Dean Evans January 07, 2008

CES 2008: Better reach and signal reception promised for wi-fi



Netgear's morning press conference at CES was an opportunity for the networking company to launch a rush of new wireless, wired and storage products. 18 of them, in fact. The highlights? Netgear's new RangeMax Dual Band Wireless-N Router and its 1TB ReadyNAS Duo storage solution for the digital home.

Wireless networking is Netgear's bread and butter and it believes that its new RangeMax Dual Band Wireless-N Router (WNDR3300) is its best router yet.

Metamaterial Antenna technology

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This new Wireless-N box uses Netgear's new Metamaterial Antenna technology, an improvement that is going to be incorporated into the company's entire range of wireless products from here on in.

The technology enables Netgear to place multiple antennas in close proximity to one another without interference. This means that the RangeMax Dual Band Wireless-N Router can incorporate eight internal antennas and still deliver improved reach and signal stability.

"Sticking antennas outside the unit is really ugly," said Vivek Pathela, vice president of product marketing at Netgear. "Densely packing them inside the unit has [poor performance]. Densely packing them has been difficult with Wireless N because MIMO needs room [to breathe]. Instead Netgear has introduced a new material for the antennae, called metamaterial". Pathela says this gives the kit more throughput and range. "It's better than any conventional technology available," he added.

The kit is very similar in appearance to the previous RangeMax range. That router used MIMO technology to boost 802.11g signals. Pathela added that the company's previous RangeMax devices had 80 per cent of their market.

ReadyNAS, steady... Go!

The RangeMax Dual Band Wireless-N Router is arguably Netgear's flagship product. But there were other launches from Netgear today, including a new RangeMax Wireless-N Gigabit Router (WNR3500) that features a five-port Gigabit switch and the CES award-winning HD/Gaming 5GHz Wireless-N Networking Kit (WNHDEB111).

Netgear also unveiled a trio of network-attached storage devices based on its business class ReadyNAS NV+ storage line. The ReadyNAS Duo 500GB Gigabit Desktop Network Storage (RND2150) is being positioned as the entry-level consumer unit and supports 1-2 SATA drives. It's bettered by the roomier 750GB (RND2175) model and the cavernous 1TB (RND2110) version.

Like its ReadyNAS NV+ counterpart, if two drives are installed, each ReadyNAS Duo will mirror data across the second drive, providing an automatic backup and failsafe against hardware failure. Netgear has acknowledged that consumers want the same technology as business users - just as long as it's easy to use. The proof will be in the testing.

Netgear also introduced a 200Mbps Powerline AV Ethernet Kit (XAVB101) and Powerline HD Plus Ethernet Adapter Kit (HDXB111). See the Netgear website for the full list of launches.

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