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BROADBAND ROUTER
\$750 | WWW.DRAYTEK.COM.AU

DrayTek Vigor2952P

A small business router with enterprise router features.

DrayTek occupies a strange place in the router pantheon. Its products tend to be targeted at a particular band of small to medium businesses and branch offices – people who need some enterprise-like features but don’t need to go for the full corporate package or support hundreds of people at once. They’re even designed like rack-mounts in miniature, with all ports except power up front, which makes them ugly but functional.

The new Vigor 2925P is one of DrayTek’s most powerful routers to date, with features rivalling some enterprise products and without some of the (often artificial) limitations of, say, Cisco 800 series routers.

One of its most interesting features is the SFP (Small Form-factor Pluggable) WAN port, which is unusual in a router in this price range. SFP lets the router (using an SFP module) connect directly to optical networks like fibre channel, SONET and

Ethernet over fibre. DrayTek actually provides a hard Ethernet port for the same WAN port as well – but if something is plugged into both, SFP takes priority. There’s also a secondary WAN Ethernet port, as well as support for USB 3G/LTE modems for additional WAN connectivity.

Even if you have no use for SFP, there’s a lot to recommend the router still. Its four LAN ports support Power over Ethernet, which makes it perfect for voice applications. It has enough processing power under the hood to support 50 SSL VPN tunnels and its twin USB ports support modems, storage or printers for sharing.

There is a huge array of business routing tools available in the firmware. There is the aforementioned VPN support – though, for some reason, SSL VPNs and other VPNs retain separate setup interfaces. There are advanced bandwidth-limiting and quality of service tools, allowing fine

session control and the setting of fixed bandwidth limits. There are also sophisticated VLAN segmentation tools, as well as load balancing rules if you’re using multiple WAN interfaces.

DrayTek includes content security management (CSM) tools as part of its interface, too – a set of tools that you can use to block certain web services and sites. It’s somewhat similar to parental controls, but with a more corporate bend, designed to stop employees from visiting inappropriate or time-wasting sites. On top of that, there is centralised management support for switches and access points built into the interface, letting you configure multiple DrayTek devices from the single router interface.

The downside of this is that all these tools and all the configuration options available to them add up to a relatively complex interface, and one that could frankly use a bit of reorganisation

and cleaning. DrayTek does not, in general, hold your hand, although we do very much appreciate that new wizards have been added to the firmware – including wizards that make setting up LAN-to-LAN and remote access VPNs about a thousand times easier.

For its complexity, however, you’re getting one of the most highly configurable routers on the market, a box that offers enterprise-level security and content management at a price and form factor more suitable for small businesses.

■ Nathan Taylor

Verdict

Features ★★★★★

Performance ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Great value for a true security router with Power over Ethernet and even SFP support.

★★★★★