apc RECOMMENDS

$350, www.draytek.com.au

DrayTek VigorAP 912C

A professional level access point with loads of features and mesh networking support.

Designed for business use, the VigorAP 912C is an affordable (~$350) wall or ceiling mount access point that can be used to create a mesh network. The sleek unit sports a single Gigabit LAN port equipped with Power over Ethernet (PoE), meaning it can be connected with one cable for reduced installation costs. It does come with a normal PSU in case your router doesn't support PoE, as well as a mounting support and template.

The access point has pretty typical specs; dual-band 802.11ac Wave 2 Wi-Fi with 2x2 MU-MIMO. In English, that means it can handle 867Mbps on the 5GHz band, and 300Mbps on the 2.4GHz band, and do so across multiple users at once. You can run the VigorAP 912C as a standard access point or range extender, but its real advantage is being used to create a mesh network.

First up though, some numbers. Using a Surface Pro and a Synology NAS, we copied data at 271Mbps at 2m range and 161Mbps at 8m distance (a few rooms away). These are solid speeds considering the hardware spec, aided by the access point being mounted up high. Sure, it might not impress those wanting multiple 4K streams, or gaming, it's perfect for general business or household use.

But what about that remote corner of the house or meeting room no one wants to use because the Wi-Fi sucks? The VigorAP 912C can be teamed up with a range of different smart access points from Draytek to create a mesh network. We tested with the VigorAP 802 – a compact little wall plug style AP that costs $150. Plug it in, use the DrayTek app to scan for mesh nodes and you are up and running in under a minute.

In our case, our spare bedroom Wi-Fi black hole went from 4Mbps (yes, it's that bad) to 94Mbps.

More importantly though is the mesh network topology. If you plug in multiple VigorAP 802 units (or other models in the VigorAP range) they all talk to each other to create a robust and fault tolerant network. That way, if Jim from accounting accidentally unplugs one AP to charge his electric scooter, the rest automatically reconfigure to fill the gap and still give the best possible coverage and bandwidth. The mesh network also seamlessly handles roaming between areas, switching you to the strongest signal.

SPECS
802.11ac 2x2 MIMO, AP, Mesh Network Range Extender; 1x PoE Gigabit LAN port, ceiling / wall mount

Setting up the VigorAP 912C is as easy as scanning the QR code with the much improved DrayTek Wireless app (Android or iOS), and running the wizard. For more in depth management, you are going to want to use the access points robust internal interface with a browser, use the included VigorConnect software, or manage it remotely via a Vigor router. The 912C has the access point features you need, such as supporting eight SSIDs, multiple virtual networks, a RADIUS server, airtime fairness, band steering and Wi-Fi scheduling.

The 912C doesn't provide the fastest, or longest range Wi-Fi, the app and software is a little utilitarian, but overall it provides an excellent experience and in depth features for a moderate price.

LINDSAY HANDMER

An affordable, functional, and easy to use access point that gets the job done with no fuss or bother.

★★★★☆

APC482.047.labs_Draytek VigorAP912C.indd 47 27/5/20 1:02 pm