PRICE $675 **WEB** www.draytek.com.au

Draytek VigorAP 1070C

Draytek networks finally get Wi-Fi 7.

While the world is celebrating the arrival of Wi-Fi 8, Draytek is finally adopting Wi-Fi 7. Long-term readers will not be surprised by this, Draytek is a company that doesn't so much embrace new networking technology, as approach it incredibly suspiciously, and only utilising it once the company is absolutely satisfied that the products are both secure and reliable enough to go to markets that stretch across verticals, SOHO and the enterprise.

While new routers have been announced, Draytek has sent us the VigorAP 1070C ceiling-mounted access point which can be used in conjunction with the company's other networking products, or any model router from any manufacturer, though if you wish to use functions such as central AP management or an AP controller you'll need a compatible DrayTek router to manage the AP.

The device itself isn't small. It weighs 1.6KG so you'll need to ensure the included mounting plate is very securely attached to the ceiling as you won't want this landing on someone's head. It feels solid and well-made and should be discreet and unnoticed in target environments. At the rear is a 12V power port but no power adapter is supplied. That's because the 10Gbps Ethernet supports PoE-PD. There's also a 2.5Gbps LAN port and a USB-A 2.0 port.

It's designed for business and education environments that require high-speed connectivity and it can support up to 512 simultaneous connections. It uses tri-band connectivity (2.4GHz, 5GHz and 6GHz) and Draytek labours the point that its MLO (Multi-Link Operation) functionality can combine all the channels into one to reduce network congestion, but we've seen this on plenty of other Wi-Fi 7 routers too.

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We tested the VigorAP 1070C by connecting its 10Gbps port to the 10Gbps port on our Synology NVMe NAS and downloaded large video files to a Wi-Fi 7 laptop up close, two-rooms away (at the front of our Sydney weatherboard home) and 15m away in the back garden. Up close it hit 2400Mbps which is 300MB/s. What was remarkable, however, was there was no hint of lag or spooling up to the top speed, it was off like a shot and stayed stable for the entire 4GB transfer. Two rooms away performance dropped to 368Mbps which is line with many Wi-Fi 7 standalone routers. It didn't connect at all when outside. Of course, this is an access point and not a router and so if you want more coverage, you simply add more access points.

Features are difficult to assess in that despite having DrayOS 5 firmware, in reality, all functionality will be inherited from the network it's attached to. Still, Draytek points out that it can be configured using the updated Draytek app and is compatible with VigorACS 3 remote network management software (with SD-WAN). It will also suit Draytek's Wi-Fi hotspot feature which allows customers (etc) to safely and securely use the internet with spare bandwidth.

At $675, it's not cheap, but then this is enterprise equipment which will usually have flexible pricing baked into lease and support agreements. Determining the value proposition is therefore based upon performance in the target market and to that end, Draytek's VigorAP 1070C could seriously help transform a slow Draytek wireless network making it a welcome upgrade to target customers. ■

SPECS Speed: Wi-Fi7 19Gbps | Connectivity: 1 x 10Gbps PoE-PD LAN, 1 x 2.5Gbps LAN, USB 2.0.

VERDICT

★★★★★

Draytek networks finally get access to Wi-Fi 7 performance.

NICK ROSS