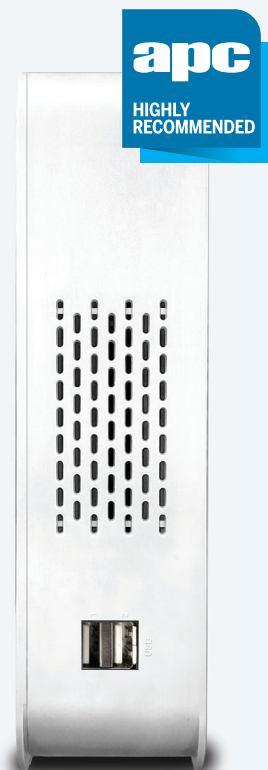


ROUTER

Draytek Vigor 2135ax

Draytek updates one of its popular SMB routers with Wi-Fi 6

■ \$549 | www.draytek.com.au



Draytek's routers are for hardened network engineers. Yet, the Wi-Fi 6-sporting Vigor 2135ax (the updated 2135) looks like it could be a domestic device with its soft-lines, white chassis and bunny-ear antennae.

There five Gigabit Ethernet ports (one WAN and four LAN) plus, two USB ports that can be used for 4G WAN failover (not load balancing) which is significantly more robust than consumer equivalents. You can also set a primary 4G connection to failover to another WAN connection if required. They can also support basic NAS and FTP server applications, a printer connection and even a thermometer for remotely checking the device's temperature. Everything can be accessed remotely (using Draytek's management software) or locally.

Set-up is all performed via an old-school desktop browser and adjusting settings is fast and responsive. The basic monitoring view eschews pretty, at-a-glance diagrams for a long, expandable list of alphanumeric connection configurations and tools like licence expiration timers for web-content filtering, app licensing and DDNS. Many features are configurable by wizards, but don't expect much hand-holding, they're more like sequential workflows with

■ Speed: Wi-Fi6 3,000Mbps; Connectivity: 4 x Gigabit LAN, 1 x Gigabit WAN, 2 x USB-A 2.0; Features: 2 x VPNs, 2 x LAN subnets, App QoS optimisation.

settings you must know in advance.

The Vigor 2135ax can now support four LAN subnets (up from two) with up to eight VLANs operating across them. LAN mirroring is also supported. There are extensive NAT features, port management, and route policy settings plus numerous firewall policies which go well beyond many rivals. DrayTek states that this device supports 50,000 NAT sessions, IPSec VPN throughput at 150Mbps (with 256-bit AES encryption) and NAT throughput of 600Mbps which boosts to 940Mbps using hardware acceleration. These stats will be music to the ears of users who regarded previous iterations as having bottlenecks.

Other core features include app management with QoS control plus the ability to act as a central management hub for up to two Vigor access points. There's also Draytek's full-blown VPN features which support the core IKEv2, SSL VPN and OpenVPN technologies. Up to 32 VPN profiles can be created but only two can be used at once.

The dual-band 2135ax isn't really built for speed, but this is a core upgrade over its similarly-featured predecessor we had

to test. In the absence of automated network optimisations, we manually scanned for an empty channel, using the browser and used the single 5GHz network to run our standard tests of downloading large video files from a Synology NAS to a Dell XPS laptop in single-storey weatherboard home. It managed 400Mbps up close, 200Mbps two rooms away and 32Mbps when 15m away in the garden. These aren't fast scores, but the performance of this router is more measured by what's connected to it rather than file transfer speeds.

At \$549 it's cheap for an SMB router with this feature-set and Draytek's userbase will be tempted by the move to Wi-Fi 6. However, it's not unique in the market with Synology offering many similar features in a more polished software environment. Still, if Draytek's exhaustive, no-frills, text-based granular settings appeal, it's a good buy.

Draytek's SMB router offers extensive, granular configuration options and settings.

Nick Ross

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