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VERDICT A solid performer with plenty of features, but one best left to advanced tinkerers.
NetGuide's RATING ●●●●○

Billion BiPAC 7401VGP-M

RRP \$189.90

WEB www.billion.com.au

PROS Billion has an excellent reputation for providing enthusiast hardware at reasonable prices. The 7401VGP-M is no exception and if you can wrap your head around the setup, you're in good hands.

This product had the highest consistent wireless throughput across the roundup, and at a measly \$190 represents the best value for an ADSL2+ modem/router combo with built-in wireless networking and VoIP support. It also sports a firewall to protect you from Internet attacks and block your kids from nasties with a keyword and domain filtering system.

CONS Despite being a solid, reliable product, this is not for first timers (unless you can convince your kids to come over and set it up for you). The printed manual is barebones at best, with only a brief explanation of each area, and there's no software installer present, which you will find on the other more user-friendly products. There's lots of control to be found in the Web interface, but that also means



Billion BiPAC
Excellent value, but not easy to set up.

Expert tips

- Before rolling out your WiFi network, do a site survey with a notebook to search for existing networks in the area. Take note of their operating channels and pick one that is less used.
- Enable security features such as WEP/WPA/WP2 before configuring your clients.
- Change your network security keys often to avoid people 'sniffing' and breaking them.
- Avoid mixing 802.11b and 802.11g hardware, as your network can only operate as quickly as the slowest client's speed.

plenty you can muck up if you're not careful.

VERDICT An exceptional product for the price, but you may want to spend the savings on a PC handyman to get it going.

NetGuide's RATING ●●●●○

NETGEAR RangeMax NEXT WNR834B

RRP \$279

WEB www.netgear.com.au

PROS One of the simplest products to get up and running, the WNR834B boasts a well-designed software installer that tests your Internet connection before you begin, and during the installation, to make sure nothing has broken along the way. The usual keyword and Web site blocking is here, but you can schedule when the profile is enforced — meaning once the kids are in bed, you can browse the Web unhindered without needing to switch profiles or change settings. Every option in the browser configuration is explained in layman's terms, making it perfect for inexperienced users.

CONS Like its bigger sibling, the NETGEAR RangeMax NEXT DG834N modem/router combo unit (below), this product does not feature an external antenna and this shows in its ranged performance. This model returned below average scores in each test and fell even further behind the pace at the 10m mark.

VERDICT Easy to set up, but lacks speed at long range.

NetGuide's RATING ●●●●○