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Solwise/Billion / 7560A HomePlug ADSL Modem Router

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Plug into broadband

Surf the internet via your power sockets with this broadband modem router – Andy Shaw investigates

Wireless networking is all the rage because it means you don't have to string cables between all the devices you want to network together. But your home is already riddled with hidden wiring that transports electricity from room to room. This broadband modem router hooks up to your broadband and pipes it through this electrical wiring, so you can connect computers in other rooms by simply plugging them into the mains with a special adapter.

Features ★★★★★
The system works at a maximum of 14Mbps – a little faster than the 802.11b Wi-Fi standard but quite a way short of 802.11g's 54Mbps. There are two things to remember though. The first is that few of us have a 14Mbps connection (at least not one delivered by ADSL over regular phone lines) so it's more than sufficient for sharing an internet connection. The second is that the performance of Wi-Fi drops significantly the more distance and objects you throw in the way.

Performance ★★★★★
We tested the kit in a domestic setting using the router plugged into a broadband connection and a power supply only – there was no direct connection to a PC. Two computers were connected through the electrical circuit using Solwise's PL14PE Ethernet Plug Adapters, which plug into a PC's Ethernet port and cost £27.15 each. Ethernet's plug-and-play capability meant that they started working immediately with the router – we didn't have to install any software. The connection was as good spanning across three stories of our test property as it was in the plug next to the router – Wi-Fi's Achilles' heels of wood, brick and plaster pose no threat to this system. Internet speeds were comparable with a Wi-Fi network working in a room next door but this performance was maintained throughout the house, with no discernable decrease in performance as we moved further away from the router.

Ease of use ★★★★★
Although the Quick Start Guide looks a bit light, there really isn't much to setting this up – you just need to enter your broadband



Share broadband around your house with this novel router solution

username and password. The set-up is easy to find your way around and there's always the manual on the supplied CD if you get stuck. The devices successfully spanned a number of electrical rings in our test property, which are all connected to the same circuit breaker – this really is a plug-and-go way to network.

Value for money ★★★★★
The modem router is fully featured and is a reasonable price, and the adapters for plugging other devices into it are also very reasonable. The only downside is that you're advised not to use extension leads with these devices, which could be more than a bit tricky behind most computers, where wall-mounted sockets are at something of a premium.

Verdict ★★★★★
This is a useful product that can help you make the most of your existing home wiring to share your broadband internet connection around the house. It's cheap, doesn't suffer from any signal strength issues if there are walls or floor between your various devices, and it's easy to install. As long as you've got enough wall sockets, Wi-Fi has a serious contender.

Solwise Router £69.55 inc VAT

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