

## Product Reviews

### Networks/Servers

#### Billion BiPAC 7402NX [PC Pro]

COMPANY: Billion

PRICE: £128 (£151 inc VAT)

RATING: ★★★★★

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**Verdict:** Fast, packed with features and with mobile broadband support too, but just a little too expensive.



There aren't too many developments in the workaday world of wireless routers that we'd call exciting. Every once in a while we get a performance boost or a standards ratification,

And in most respects, the latest wireless router from Billion follows this template. It's a pretty standard draft-n router: it doesn't look anything special from the outside

with its regular, rectangular box shape and three aerials poking up at the back.

But take a look at that rear panel and you'll see something a little unusual: a USB socket. Not for connecting a printer or external storage - we've seen that trick before - but for giving shared access to the internet via a USB mobile broadband dongle.

That might sound a bit pointless given that the 7402NX already has an ADSL2/2+ modem built in, but if you rely on your internet connection being up 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it's a godsend. If your ADSL connection goes down, it will automatically switch over to the HSDPA connection, and there are other applications, too.

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If you need to move from an LLU [broadband supplier](#) to standard BT-based ADSL, for instance, you can move over to mobile and ensure that you're not without internet for the period of the switchover. Setup is a bit fiddly - you need to supply the router with APN, username and password details - and the list of supported dongles isn't 100% comprehensive, but once done it works as well as your network and dongle will allow.

That's not the only area where the BiPAC impresses, though. There's a solid array of features, including four Gigabit Ethernet sockets, a built-in ADSL2/2+ modem, secured VPN with support for up to 16 simultaneous tunnels, and a pretty usable web-based setup, though there are no luxury extras such as multiple SSIDs, guest modes or status screens. You'll get these if you splash out on a [Belkin N1 Vision](#).

Performance is excellent, too. In direct back-to-back speed tests against the Linksys WAG160N, we found this router to be fractionally faster, achieving solid file transfer throughput of 43 to 44Mbit/sec in all locations around the house, and an equally impressive 18Mbit/sec in our stress test, 40 metres away from the house. The Linksys lagged distinctly behind.

In fact it's such a good performance that we'd have no hesitation in recommending this router; if it weren't for the price. It's an impressive piece of kit, but £150 is an awful lot of money to pay for the luxury of VPN and mobile broadband support, the latter of which may only be employed intermittently.

By Jonathan Bray

#### SPECIFICATIONS:

802.11n draft 2.0 wireless router, 3 x aerials, 4 x Gigabit Ethernet, integrated ADSL2/2+ modem, USB socket supporting mobile broadband modems (see [website](#) for full list of supported devices), 2yr warranty, 230 x 115 x 37mm (WDH).