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News

Ruckus Gets Smart with 802.11n Outdoor Solution

By [Naomi Graychase](#)

July 20, 2009

Ruckus Wireless today joins the [ranks of Wi-Fi vendors](#) with [substantial 802.11n outdoor](#) equipment offerings. In Ruckus's case, the result is an outdoor dual-band 802.11n and single-band 802.11g Wi-Fi access point that leverages its patented "dynamic beamforming" technology.

The new Ruckus Smart Wi-Fi outdoor products pledge "a two- to four-fold increase in signal range and reliability" over competitors' solutions.

"It's the first concurrent dual-band enterprise box of its kind on the market today. We're trying to change the price-performance metric for outdoor Wi-Fi, for both enterprise and service provider markets. It's n performance and range at g prices," David Callisch, Ruckus Wireless VP of Marketing told *Wi-Fi Planet*.

City lights

Ruckus's Wi-Fi solution, says Callisch, can be centrally managed as part of an overall indoor/outdoor WLAN infrastructure, and can provide reliable Wi-Fi access to outdoor "hot zones."

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“We think that the outdoor Wi-Fi market has changed,” says Callisch. “We used to think of metro Wi-Fi as lighting up the city on poles, but that market has arguably faltered somewhat because it is so expensive to do it and it takes so long. There’s no clear ROI on providing such a service by a city. The enterprises that build those networks, they’re starting to offer outdoor Wi-Fi as a ‘hotzone,’ a specific area with service, where there’s a large, dense user environment, like multi-dwelling units, apartments, resorts, universities, schools, even enterprise quads in healthcare, where there are lots of users who need outdoor coverage.”

The new ZoneFlex 7762 (\$1999; available in August), a centrally-managed, concurrent dual-band 802.11n outdoor AP, is capable of sustaining performance of up to 150 Mbps over 1000 feet (300 meters) between meshed nodes and up to 50 Mbps to client devices over 500 feet (150 meters), says Callisch. Also new today, the ZoneFlex 2741 (\$899; available now), a centrally-managed 802.11g outdoor AP, is capable of sustaining performance of up to 30 Mbps over 1000 feet (300 meters) between mesh nodes and up to 25 Mbps over 500 feet (150 meters) to client devices, he says.

“These products operate in conjunction with indoor products,” says Callisch. “One of the big gripes of outdoor systems is that you have to buy indoor equipment from one vendor, outdoor from another, and get your backhaul from a third. People want a centrally managed approach.”

Beam me up

Ruckus’s dynamic [beamforming](#) “automatically directs wireless radio transmissions to the best performing signal path on a per-packet basis using real-time feedback mechanisms inherent in the 802.11 protocol.” In other words, the equipment can adapt to changes in the RF environment on-the-fly, which results in improvement in range and performance.

“With these APs we can listen better... We have more ears in different directions, as a result we can hear better,” Nive Hanigal, Director of Product Management explains. “We have so many antennas available that we can pick the direction to send a signal; we can also listen in a certain direction, as well. We can selectively ignore signals that we know will interfere with what we’re doing.

“We are able to leverage our smart antenna to use one set of patterns between APs, so we can follow the client as they move, leveraging different antenna patterns, we can go around trees (but not walls) dealing with interference; we can hear much more coming from all directions. It’s making a huge difference,” says Hanigal.

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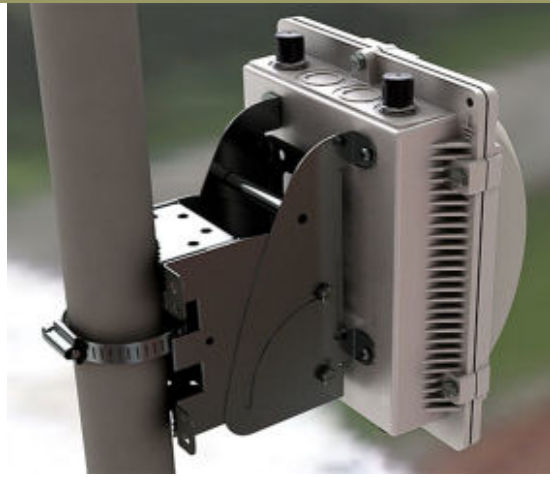
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The new ZoneFlex 7762 (pictured, right) is a concurrent dual-band (2.4/5GHz band) 802.11n Smart Wi-Fi access point. It supports both 802.3af and 802.3at power over Ethernet (PoE) is IP-67 rated for water and dust, and operates in temperatures ranging from -40°C - 65°C (-40°F - 149°F). It provides an additional power over Ethernet output port that can be used to connect and power devices, such as an IP camera without additional cabling—useful for CCTV deployments—and an integrated heater for use in cold climates.



The ZoneFlex 2741 is an 802.11g Smart Wi-Fi AP that supports 802.3af power over Ethernet, is IP-65 rated for water and dust, and operates in temperatures ranging from -20°C - 65°C (-4°F - 149°F). It also features integrated support for L2TP tunneling and future support for the WISPr protocol.

Both were designed, says Callisch, to deliver “ultra-reliable and high-performance Wi-Fi at half the cost of conventional alternatives,” and can be pole-, ceiling-, or wall-mounted. “We always include everything—including brackets,” says Callisch. “That’s one of the big pet peeves in the enterprise, they get nickel-and-dimed; they get charged license fees and they don’t like that. Ours are all inclusive.”

Both the 7762 and the 2741 can be deployed as standalone APs, managed by the Ruckus FlexMaster remote Wi-Fi management system, or as part of a unified indoor/outdoor wireless LAN system managed by the Ruckus ZoneDirector Smart WLAN controller.

Future case

Ruckus is positioning itself to benefit from what it anticipates as the next big market: data offload from cellular carriers.

“It’s an interesting extension. The mobile operators that have dual-mode devices, like the iPhone, they are looking to take the data traffic and offload it from congested 3G networks into Wi-Fi, so you can still use your phone for voice over 3G, but use your iPhone or watch YouTube over Wi-Fi,” says Callisch. “It’s a big problem in the service provider industry that will drive Wi-Fi business—3G offload—whether they are in China or the U.S., they are overwhelmed by data traffic on these devices. They are more graphic rich, some apps like the Slingbox and Skype on the iPhone only operate over Wi-Fi. Operators are fit to be tied because the GSM network isn’t capable of supporting the apps, and they need to be able to support them. Wi-Fi is the ideal solution. And for that, they need to augment the 3G and build out with Wi-Fi hotspots.”

“In China for example,” he says, “there’s a country-wide strategy of 3G plus Wi-Fi. A lot of tenders from China Mobile and China Telecom include Wi-Fi as part of 3G build-out. We’re looking to exploit that.”

For more on outdoor Wi-Fi solutions, read:

- [Enterprise Wireless Goes into the Cloud](#)
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Naomi Graychase is Managing Editor at Wi-Fi Planet. She has been a technology journalist since 1994.