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## Take Two: 802.11n Up For Approval Again

By [Andy Patrizio](#)

January 19, 2007

The IEEE's 802.11 working group has unanimously approved Draft 1.10 of the 802.11n Wi-Fi spec and has sent it to the entire membership of the IEEE for approval. The IEEE has no timeline for when it expects the membership to approve, but if they do, this will be the final 802.11n spec.

The approval puts the spec slightly ahead of schedule. Just last August it was believed that the spec would not be sent out for approval until March of this year. However, it's also believed that the final spec won't be approved by the IEEE membership at large until next year. The IEEE declined to comment on when it expects final approval.

The 802.11n spec has taken a somewhat tortured path to approval. There have been stories of in-fighting among members and the original spec was rejected by the members in May of 2006. "This group has not been known for its cohesive behavior to date," Chris Silva, analyst at Forrester Research, told [internetnews.com](#).

The inability to get the 11n spec finalized hasn't stopped vendors from shipping 802.11n products based on preliminary specs that weren't even compatible from one brand name to

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another. This led to some negative reviews of the initial 11n products on the market.

Still, vendors are forging ahead, putting "Draft N" 802.11n-labeled gear out there for sale. Intel (Quote) has stated it intends to put draft 802.11n chips in its new Centrino Pro/Santa Rosa chipset due in April 2007. Apple (Quote) is putting draft 802.11n in its AirPort Extreme, Apple TV and all Intel Core 2 Duo and Xeon-based Macs.

In an attempt to get 802.11n in the market faster, the Wi-Fi Alliance has announced it would begin certifying 802.11n equipment in two waves. Products based on Draft 2.0 would be certified in March, and once the spec is finalized, products would then be certified as fully 802.11n compliant.

All that could do is delay the rollout of 11n, said Silva. "You want to know your products are protected. This could slow down ratification as vendors work to make sure everything is in the spec that should be in to make sure everything works," he said.

As it is, Silva has his reservations about 802.11n because it uses the same 2.4GHz spectrum as 11b and 11g and there could be some interference. With potential conflict between specs, the only solution may be to rip and replace all old Wi-Fi technologies with 11n.

"So enterprises have to think do I want to refresh my entire wireless LAN to get 11n," he said. "They have to ask do I need this increased range and bandwidth to justify revamping my entire wireless LAN?"

Silva thinks 11n will be appealing to large, open areas like shipyards or large corporate campuses, but most users can get by with 11g just fine now. "There's a limited business argument, and right now there is no clear app that demands 11n in the enterprise," he said.



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