

## Zyxel NWA1302-AC

This discreet do-it-all access point combines in-room Wi-Fi, LAN and PoE+ services with cloud management

SCORE ★★★★★

PRICE £124 exc VAT from ebuyer.com

Zyxel's NWA1302-AC is a wireless AP with a difference. As well as the expected 2.4GHz and 5GHz wireless services, this little white box has three Gigabit LAN ports, one of them PoE+-enabled. This makes it ideal for meeting rooms, reception areas and any areas needing both wired and wireless network services, and it can also power devices such as IP phones.

Physically, the NWA1302-AC is unassuming. It measures just 90 x 170mm, and looks like a plain plastic box – although it has a sturdy metal baseplate. The three Ethernet ports are tucked away at the bottom, while the uplink port is concealed in a recess at the side. A supplied mounting plate means the unit can be easily located near to – or on top of – a wall box.

In terms of Wi-Fi, this AC1200 AP supports concurrent 2.4GHz and 5GHz wireless, with the benefit of Zyxel's 3G/4G interference immunity technology. Up to eight SSIDs per radio can be configured, and each can be customised with security profiles. The one thing that's missing is MU-MIMO – only the single-user variant is supported – but that shouldn't be a big problem, as the NWA1302-AC isn't intended to serve a large userbase.

As well as a good spread of network features, there's a versatile set of management options: you can configure the AP from the built-in web portal, use Zyxel's Windows-



based configuration app, or connect to the free Nebula cloud platform.

We started our testing by connecting the AP's uplink port to a TP-Link TL-SG3424P PoE+ switch (allowing it to drive the PoE+-enabled LAN port) and opening up the native web console. This was pleasingly familiar, as it's consistent across all of Zyxel's business APs, with a customisable dashboard displaying device status, utilisation, wireless interfaces and any detected rogue APs. From here you can set up profiles to apply QoS voice or video traffic prioritisation, apply L2 isolation and create MAC address black- and whitelists. A widget shows devices connected to the three LAN ports, and this correctly identified our Yealink T23G IP phone.

Performance isn't world-beating, but considering the size of the NWA1302-AC it's not bad at all. We were able to copy a large file from our Netgear AC1200-equipped Windows 10 Pro desktop onto the server at an average of 42MB/sec; from 10m away, this only fell to 38MB/sec.

**LEFT** It's small, but this AP is stacked with features and management options



**“We were able to carry our iPad 40m down the main building corridor before the SweetSpots iOS app registered a signal dropout”**

**RIGHT** Ethernet connections are discreetly located on the bottom and side of the casing

Indeed, the NWA1302-AC's range is pretty good. We were able to carry our iPad 40m down the main building corridor before the SweetSpots iOS app registered a signal dropout. That's more than enough coverage to fill a hotel room or conference suite.

The NWA1302-AC delivers good speeds over Ethernet, too. Copying files between a desktop PC connected to the second LAN port and our server, we recorded read and write speeds of 106MB/sec and 100MB/sec.

Importing the AP into our Nebula cloud account was a simple matter of entering its MAC address and serial number. After a minute, it appeared online in the portal, and local web access was disabled. Nebula manages not just APs, but cloud-enabled firewalls, switches and wireless devices – but its homepage can be easily switched between viewing

them all or APs only.

There's a lot of useful data here, with details of total traffic and connected wireless clients, and selecting an AP presents live and historical traffic graphs.

Rogue detection services aren't available, however, and although Nebula correctly reported that our AP had three LAN ports, it didn't identify the attached devices.

Naturally, Nebula is most useful when you have more than one AP to manage. You can choose whether all



access points should broadcast all configured networks, or whether different SSIDs should be available in different areas. SSIDs can be assigned their own authentication scheme, and you can apply L2 isolation, bandwidth restrictions, captive portals and walled gardens.

Zyxel's versatile NWA1302-AC provides a full set of network services in a compact package. It's easy to deploy, offers multiple management options and its low price will appeal to small businesses. **DAVE MITCHELL**

### SPECIFICATIONS

Dual-band 2.4GHz/5GHz 802.11ac • 2 x 2 SU-MIMO internal aerial • Gigabit Ethernet pass-through port • 3 x Gigabit (2 x LAN, 1 x PoE/PoE+) • Wall mounting kit • 90 x 170 x 29mm (WDH) • 540g • Limited lifetime warranty

**LEFT** The NWA1302-AC integrates neatly with Zyxel's Nebula cloud platform

