

Wifi 6 Certification Starts

Written by Alice Marshall
18 September 2019

The Wifi Alliance kicks off the Wifi Certified 6 program-- the certification program verifying the interoperability of IEEE 802.11ax devices, ensuring they work well together while pushing the performance and security capabilities of the standard.



In case one needs a refresher, Wifi 6 (aka 802.11ax) promises to allow many more devices to use the same wifi channels and frequencies within the same area, without causing as much congestion and lag as Wifi 5 (aka 802.11ac) or Wifi 4 (802.11n). The standard also mandates support for the WPA3 encryption and authentication protocol, allowing for more robust security over WPA2 through the use of Simultaneous Authentication of Equals (SAE).

“Wifi Certified 6 is ushering in a new era of wifi, building on wifi’s core characteristics to provide better performance in every environment for users, greater network capacity for service providers to improve coverage for their customers, and new opportunities for advanced applications,” the Wifi Alliance says. “Wifi Certified 6 will deliver improvements in connectivity, including in high density locations and IoT environments.”

It all sounds good, but it does come with a bit of a catch, at least for users-- Wifi 6 requires a hardware update, meaning customers need to check whether recently acquired devices support

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the standard. Recent flagship smartphones, such as the iPhone 11 models and the Samsung Galaxy Note 10, offer Wifi 6 support, as do laptops with 10th generation (Ice Lake and Comet Lake) Intel CPUs.

Routers offering Wifi 6 support are still somewhat lacking, if rapidly picking up pace. Netgear has the RAX80, RAX120 and AX6000, while TP-Link offers the Deco X10 and Archer AX6000 routers. Expect many more devices with Wifi 6 capability to launch in the coming months.

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