

→ WIRELESS ROUTER

SMC Barricade N Wireless Router

OVERALL RATING ★★☆☆

\$175



- Performance.
 - Easy to set up.
 - Significant lag when streaming HD videos.
- QUALITY ★★★★★
- FEATURES ★★★★★
- USABILITY ★★★★★
- VALUE ★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS
Transfer Rate Up to 300Mbps
Range Up to 300m
Management Features EZ Installation Wizard, Web based management interface (HTTP), Remote management
Dimension/Weight 180x122x30mm / 320g

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Browser user interface: Advanced configuration page.

This new draft-N wireless router from SMC is designed for home and office users and it boasts a fast transfer rate of up to 300Mbps with coverage of up to 300m. Based on the Atheros chipset, the SMC Barricade N (model SMCWBR14-N2) is the improved version of its SMCWBR14-N sibling with the additional features of WPS (Wi-Fi Protected Setup) and WISH (Wireless Intelligent Stream Handling).

Our review unit comes in a silver and light blue finish with three fixed antennas; the previous model has two fixed and one detachable antenna. At the rear holds four 10/100Mbps and a WAN port, reset button and the WLAN switch.

According to the manufacturer, the Barricade N wireless router incorporates their proprietary Intelligent Stream Handling technology which helps to reduce game lag and provide high quality voice and video streaming. Other features include user friendly web-based management interface, NAT firewall with Stateful Packet Inspection

(SPI) and the Barricade N wireless router also has integrated wireless access point that is compliant with the 802.11n draft v2.0 specifications, and is also fully backward compatible with the existing 802.11g and 802.11b standards.

Setting up the router is no mean task – you just need to plug your Cable or ADSL Ethernet cable to the WAN port. And if you are using a desktop PC with no wireless card or adapter, then connect the network cable from your PC's network port to one of the four 10/100Mbps ports on the router. But if you are using a notebook with wireless connectivity, just connect wirelessly to the router and you are set.

You can log into the web-based admin control panel with the default username and password mentioned in the user's manual, and configure the router according to your preference. The control panel is user-friendly and offers various settings including DHCP server, MAC address filtering, access control, WPA/WPA2 encryption for security

as well as viewing the status of the WAN, LAN and wireless LAN.

For our tests, we set up the wireless router in a typical office environment and used two notebooks (ASUS A8SR and Toshiba Qosmio G40) that have been preinstalled with IXIA Qcheck, a network performance measurement tool. SMC also provided us with the EZ Connect N Wireless Cardbus Adapter which we installed on the Toshiba notebook.

We tested the wireless performance with 1MByte of data at a range of 10 metres and 25 metres and recorded an average throughput of 11.57Mbps and 1.32Mbps respectively. High Definition (HD) 720p video streaming was not very smooth at both distances with frozen and skipped frames, though DVD-like quality video streaming was more seamless with insignificant lag.

Overall, the SMC Barricade N wireless router did not disappoint in our tests and is currently retailing at a reasonable \$175.

—Koh Siang Liang