

Surfing the 3G wave

Mobile broadband connections via 3G is fast becoming an add-on feature to otherwise regular routers.

Plug a 3G USB dongle into one of these routers and you get a personal wireless hot spot that can also serve as a back up to the fixed-line broadband connection you have at home.

With a 3G-enabled portable Wi-Fi router, you can set up a broadband connection anywhere and your friends can hop on to your connection as well. You can also easily connect multiple devices, such as a Sony PlayStation Portable and laptops.

Here is a trio of 3G-ready routers available in shops here.



Edimax 3G-6210N

\$130

This pocket-sized gizmo makes you wonder how you ever lived without one, especially when travelling. It is a regular traveller's Wi-Fi router which not only supports 3G, but is also truly portable when powered by its removable 1,880mAh battery.

This means it is equally at home sitting on your desk or tucked in your pocket.

When travelling, you can carry this portable router around and your friends can surf the Web via the device. At home, you can plug it into a wall socket.

The only downside is that when compared with dedicated MiFi routers, the Edimax device requires an additional 3G USB modem which you plug into the device's USB port.

However, the Edimax is an almost full-featured Wi-Fi router here, with support for encryption standards such as WEP, WPA

and WPA2, so your data is well-protected when it is sent over the air.

It also comes with advanced features like Quality of Service (QoS) and Denial of Service protection. The former lets you prioritise traffic for better performance. The latter protects you from Web attacks.

The most appealing aspect of this gizmo, however, is its ease of use. I plugged a StarHub Huawei E1550 3G modem into its USB port and within seconds, I was online with my laptop via the router's Wi-Fi link. No software installation was needed.



D-Link DAP-1350

\$140

Unlike the Edimax router, the D-Link Wi-Fi router is not battery-powered, so you cannot use it while carrying it in your pocket.

However, you can still use it on the go as it comes with a USB charger cable that can draw power from your laptop. It also comes with a regular charger which you can plug into a wall socket.

Unlike the other two routers featured here, the D-Link device requires a bit of work to set up. You have to log in to the settings page via a Web browser (note: Google's Chrome browser does not display the page correctly) and indicate that you are plugging in a USB 3G modem.

A caveat: This device supports only 3G dongles from D-Link, namely the DWM152 and DWM156, so the Huawei USB dongles that you get from telcos when you sign up for