

TECH / GOOGLE / SMART HOME

Google announces Nest Wifi, a mesh router system with smart speakers inside / Extending your Wi-Fi and your voice at the same time

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Oct 15, 2019, 4:34 PM GMT+2



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Google's new Wifi router is a smart speaker



You want working, reliable Wi-Fi in every room of your house. Maybe you'd like every room of your house to properly hear your Google Assistant voice commands, too?

Now, Google is about to offer a way to extend both your internet and the range of your voice at once — with the just-announced [Nest Wifi mesh router system](#).

Announced [at Google's Pixel 4 hardware event](#), Nest Wifi is composed of a new, bulbous “Router” and a separate similarly shaped “Point” that now extend your coverage 25 percent further than the previous generation — [which Google claims](#) is

enough for a 3,800 square foot home with one Router and one Point. Only the “Point” has a Google Assistant smart speaker built in, though.

The two-pack costs \$269, and there’s a three-pack for \$349, with preorders today and devices available on November 4th in the US and coming to other countries in Q4. The Point will arrive in three different pastel colors, a white, brown, and blue, though the Router will always be white. It’s also the only one with Gigabit Ethernet ports around back to plug in your modem and one additional wired device.



Those aren’t the only ways to buy, though: as Dieter explains in his hands-on, they’re backwards compatible with the existing Google Wifi point, which is sticking around at \$99, and you can buy a single Nest Wifi router with a 2,200 square foot range for \$169. They’re potentially compatible with other brands, too, since they support the 802.11s mesh networking standard — though brands typically don’t make these devices interoperable.

Google’s new routers don’t support the new Wi-Fi 6 standard, but the company does claim these new routers are twice as fast as the previous generation with AC2200 MU-MIMO 802.11ac Wi-Fi, with a 4 x 4 antenna configuration on the Router and 2 x 2 antennas on the Point for both the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands. They’ll also have Bluetooth Low Energy and support for the long-in-development-yet-still-nascent

Thread smart home protocol that rival Eero has also been chasing a good long while, though Google says Thread capabilities aren't coming till 2020.



Google says you can use the Assistant to control your Wi-Fi network, too, as easily as saying “Hey Google, pause the Wi-Fi for Daniel” to get your kid’s attention. (That’s an exact example from Google’s blog post.) We’re definitely curious if it’s anywhere near that easy.

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Since Google first introduced its Google Wifi system three years ago at \$299 for a three-pack, mesh routers have become a popular way to eliminate Wi-Fi dead zones in a house, with every major router company offering a set. Google says its original Wifi has been the bestselling router in the US and Canada.

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But while many rivals offer higher speeds and more power user features, Google's closest competition for a simpler Wi-Fi experience that blends into your house has been Eero — which also pioneered the idea of making mesh Wi-Fi cheaper and easier to install by replacing two of the three main routers and their cords with "beacons" that can hang right off the power outlets on your walls. Google's new Points don't do that, though.

Amazon bought Eero earlier this year, giving Google's greatest rival in voice assistants a foothold in the Wi-Fi market, too, and it quickly introduced a new \$99 Eero router that lets you shut off internet to specific devices with Alexa voice control. Now it appears Google may leapfrog Amazon by adding actual microphones to its hardware, so you don't need to additionally set up a Google smart speaker in that room of your house.

Google Nest Wifi / Available in November starting at \$149

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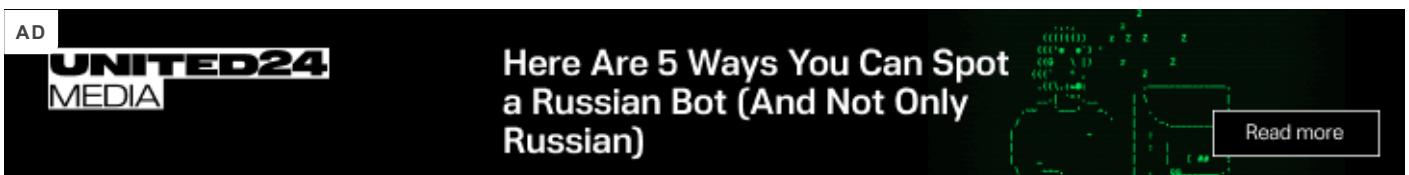
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