

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2707/zyxel-powerline-homeplug-av-adapter>

ZyXEL PowerLine HomePlug AV adapter (PLA401)

Is this a viable alternative to wireless networking?

by Stuart Miles published on 13 November 2007

If you've got a big house, or are experiencing trouble with your wireless network, then one option to still get a connection around your house is via a HomePlug solution. But can ZyXEL's offering match the multitude of company's now offering similar products? We get connected to find out.

For those not in the know, the idea of the HomePlug system is simple, but very clever. Using the power cables already in your house as networking cable you can get the Internet or your network around the home without the need to set up a wireless connection.

Where it comes into its own is transferring or streaming large amounts of data quickly. The system supports up to 200Mbps making it ideal for HD quality content as well as gaming, a la Xbox or PlayStation.

Basically you plug one end via a network cable into your ASDL router and nearby power socket. You then take the second HomePlug adapter and plug it into a power socket where you are trying to get the network connection and then a network cable from it to the device you are connecting.

One minute later (it really is this quick) and you've got the network extended and most likely the Internet to somewhere you haven't before.

In practice and it's that easy. The ZyXEL PowerLine HomePlug AV adapter has three lights on the front on the plug so you can see what is happening quickly and whether or not you've got connection and network activity.

From a hardware perspective the only complaint we have is the size of the plugs themselves.



...cont.

Although ZyXEL do offer the same product in a different form factor if you want it, the plug is built -in you've got to take the hit on the size front. The adapter is large enough to take over the next plug socket on your regular four-gang bar or even more on one of those squarer eight-gang ones meaning you've really got to plug it in to the wall if you're not going to lose multiple sockets.

Performance wise and we were very impressed by the adapters with little or no drop out regardless of what the network was doing. That's not to say that it's perfect, far from it, and if you're network is prone to drop out for one reason or another, it won't stop that problem being carried on to the connection here, but on the whole we were pleased with performance. Certainly nothing a quick power off, power on didn't fix.

When it came to transferring files or streaming HD quality files between computers we experienced no problems, drop-outs or lags.

VERDICT

The ZyXEL PowerLine HomePlug AV adapter (PLA401) is very good at what it does, allowing you to set up a home network without getting involved in wireless connectivity quickly and easily.

Compared to the competition there isn't much here to stand them apart from the crowd, but they are still good strong performers that are worth a closer look.

The only grumble we have is the size of the unit.

At a glance

What is it?

Network via your plug socket

Good

1 minute setup, display icons to see what is happening

Bad

Plugs are very large

Verdict

Very good at what they do, it will allow you to set up a home network without the worries of wireless quickly and easily

Price 49.99 for one &#pound;99.99 for two

Our score

8/10

Your score

1/10