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AirTies 4420 review

Fling HD around your home with this easy to use media streamer

Our Score

Last reviewed: Thursday at 09:30 BST

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Most new TVs, Freeview, Freesat and even Sky boxes are no longer just TV receivers; there's usually an Ethernet port for networking features. The problem is that most internet routers are somewhere far from your TV, entailing long Ethernet cable runs or using a Powerline network extender.

As Powerline gets faster, however, so increases its tendency to interfere with other radio users. Wireless connections would be ideal, but typical domestic 802.11g networks aren't fast enough for HD video, and the 2.4GHz spectrum they use is getting very crowded.

A new standard, 802.11n, offers a way forward. It's a more robust and efficient use of Wi-Fi spectrum, but it offers higher speeds as well, and can operate in a chunk of less congested 5GHz spectrum. Most Wi-Fi-n devices are also backwards compatible with 'b' and 'g' devices.

The Airties 4420 is a simple Wi-Fi-n network extender that uses the new standard to bridge the gap between your router and TV.

The two small units connect to standard Ethernet cables at each end, and are paired together with a simple press of their Airtouch buttons. The 4420TV version also has a USB 2.0 port for flash drives/HDDs, with a built-in UPnP/DLNA server for playing back music, video and photo files.

The 4420s also support Mesh networking, so they can daisy-chain to extend the network's total coverage.

A setup utility isn't for straightforward links, but gives you access to advanced features like Quality of Service settings. There are no off-the-shelf presets for these, though, so you'll need to know your networks to get the best out of this.



The AirTies 4420 is simple to set up, but some of the advanced features demand you know your networking

PRODUCT SUMMARY**4420****Price at launch****£75.00****For**

- > High-speed wireless network extension
- > One-touch setup

Against

- > Short range at 5GHz
- > Difficult to adjust settings
- > No explanation of advanced features

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Initial setup was easy, and using a Slingbox/Slingcatcher combination we measured speeds above 8Mbit/s – easily sufficient for HD streaming.

However, the ability to penetrate building materials reduces at higher frequencies and at 5GHz we found the 4420's range severely limited, even by concrete and wood. With some difficulty we reset to 2.4GHz, taking a greedy 40MHz slice for Wi-Fi-n only, with better results.

The Airties 4420 is competitive on price and performance with lower-speed Powerline devices, without their interference issues, but an easier way to access the QoS settings is needed.

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(Reviewed by Alex Lane - *What Satellite & Digital TV Issue 301*)

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