

NEWS

BEST WI-FI EXTENDER

No, Even the Best Wi-Fi Extender Isn't Worth Your Time

We spent hours testing Wi-Fi extenders, but they failed to impress. There are better ways to improve your internet coverage.

After testing some of the best Wi-Fi extenders on the market, my advice? Don't buy one. It's not that Wi-Fi extenders don't work but that they don't work well. There are many more-effective ways to improve your Wi-Fi, and I'll dig into a few later on, but first I want to explain the issues I have with extenders—also sometimes called Wi-Fi range boosters or repeaters.

If you still want to try one, I have a few options for you to consider. Also, check out our other networking guides, including the Best Routers, Best Mesh Routers, and Best VPNs.

The Trouble With Wi-Fi Extenders

As the name suggests, Wi-Fi extenders pick up the Wi-Fi signal from your router and extend it. They use the same frequency band as your main router and repeat the signal. They are designed to boost signal strength in the immediate area but will not increase speed. In fact, they will reduce it. Here's what I've come across in my testing:

Slower speeds: The theoretical maximum speed an extender can provide is 50 percent of the speed you get from your main router, because it connects to your router via Wi-Fi (backhaul) and broadcasts its own separate network for devices. Realistically, the speed you get from an extender will always be lower than

50 percent, depending on various factors such as distance, interference, and obstacles.

Latency increase: The drop in speed from the extender may be manageable if you have a fast enough network to begin with, but Wi-Fi extenders also increase latency. If you are playing an online game or having a video call, this increased latency can be disastrous, potentially causing lag and glitches. This was a recurring problem in my tests.

Congestion: Wi-Fi extenders can cause congestion and interfere with your main network, and there is no seamless hand-off for your devices as you move around the house, because they will decide when to switch between networks unless you switch manually. Because the signal strength of the Wi-Fi extender doesn't reflect its speed, it can be tricky to know when to switch. What appears to be a weaker signal from the main router may still be faster than a strong signal from the extender.

Smart home issues: Traditionally, Wi-Fi extenders take the signal from your router and rebroadcast it under a different network name (SSID). The default is usually to add EXT to the end. This means you need to connect devices to the extender separately. Some newer extenders, often described as "mesh ready," can connect to your main router and rebroadcast under the same network name. Because Wi-Fi extenders connect to your router via Wi-Fi just like any other device and create a separate network, devices that connect to it are no longer connected directly to your main router. This can cause all sorts of issues.

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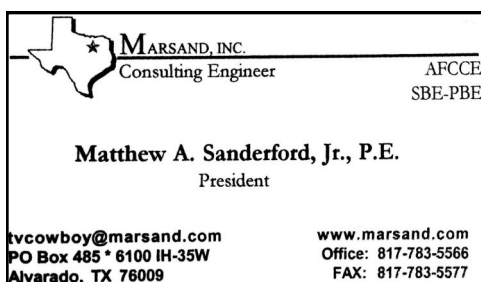
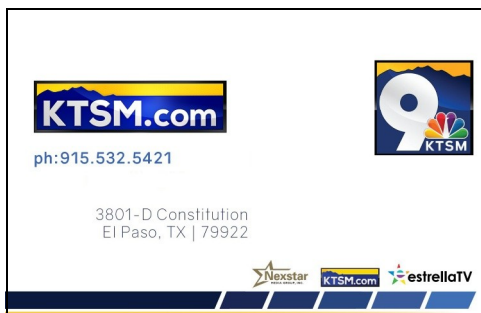
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Some smart-home controls and devices require your phone to be on the same network as the device it is trying to control. If the extender assigns MAC addresses virtually for connected devices, expect issues with many smart-home devices not being recognized—features like parental controls and MAC filtering won't work.

Difficult placement: Most Wi-Fi extenders are designed to plug directly into an outlet, but this severely limits where you can place them, making it tough to get the best performance. They are also often bulky enough to block adjacent outlets.

Price problems: Cheap Wi-Fi extenders perform very poorly and are impossible to recommend, but good Wi-Fi extenders are too expensive compared to increasingly affordable routers and mesh systems.

Wi-Fi Extender Alternatives

There are many alternatives to a Wi-Fi extender, but keeping it brief, these are my top recommendations:

Move your router: Seriously, try this before you buy anything. Routers pump out Wi-Fi in a rough circle, so the ideal place for your router is in the middle of your home, and higher up is better. If you can run a cable and move your router from the edge of your home into the middle, you can expect a big improvement. Even if you can't move your router far, consider elevating it, changing its position, and fiddling with the antennas (if it has any). Do not shut your router away in a closet or drawer. A quick way to test the difference is to type "speed test" into the browser on your phone and run it before and after any changes in the location you are having issues with.

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EL PASO, TX SBE CHAPTER 38 MEETING MINUTE

DATE 09/09/2025 LOCATION: EPTX-RINCON DE CORTEZ

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 12:11 AM, BY ANTONIO CASTRO. WE WERE ONLY 7 (SEVEN) ATTENDANTS.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY: MINUTES ON THE AUGUST 2025 NEWSLETTER ACCEPTED BY NORBERT MILES, SECONDED BY ROBERT PORTILLO.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: \$ 1,075.32 IN THE BANK. ACCEPTED BY ROBERT PORTILLO, SECONDED BY NOE RODRIGUEZ.

REPORT OF THE CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE: NO REPORT.

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: ELIAS VENTANILLA TO INVITE "TELEMUNDO 48" AS SUSTAINING MEMBER. DAVID SANDERFORD RETURNED IN HONOR OF HIS DAD, MATH SANDERFORD, FORMER "MARSAND"

REPORT OF THE FREQUENCY COORDINATOR COMMITTEE: INTERFERENCE IN THE 400 MHZ OVER VAN HORN, TX.

REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: NO REPORT.

REPORT OF THE WEBSITE COMMITTEE: NO REPORT

REPORT OF THE EAS CHAIRMAN: NO REPORT

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE: NOE RODRIGUEZ WILL TALK TO EL PASO WATER FOR GROUP PRESENTATION.

NEW BUSINESS OR ANY ITEMS FOR THE CHAPTER INTEREST: NONE

OTHER. NONE

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION: OCTOBER 14 10:30 AM IN ZOOM MODE

MEETING ADJOURNED: AT 12:25 PM.



OCTOBER PROGRAM

THERE WAS A MEETING FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER IN THE "RINCON DE CORTEZ" MEXICAN RESTAURANT. NO PRESENTATION THIS TIME, ONLY THE BASIC AND REGULARS.

NOW FOR OCTOBER, WE WILL MEET IN THE ZOOM MODE WITH THE PRESENTATION OF

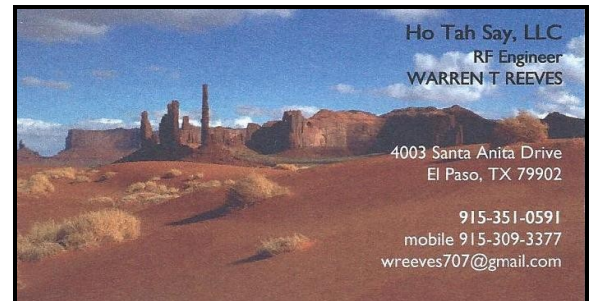
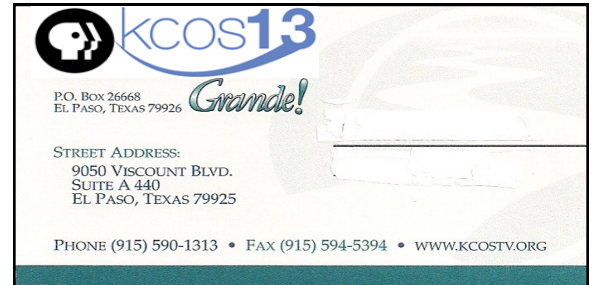


JAMES BLOPMFIELD WILL DO THE PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF DAVID ALLEN

WHEN: TUESDAY THE 14TH

WHEN: ZOOM FROM ANTONIO'S

TIME: FROM 10:30 AM



Use Ethernet cables: The best way to get fast internet everywhere is to run Ethernet cables around your home, but this can be invasive and likely won't work as a solution for renters. Ethernet cables plugged into your main router will get you as close as possible to your fastest internet speed (the speed your ISP delivers). You can reconfigure old routers and Wi-Fi extenders as additional access points in other parts of your home if you can run Ethernet cables to them. Mesh systems also work best with a wired backhaul.

Buy a new router: If you are using the router that your ISP supplied or an old router (Wi-Fi 5 or older), it might be time to consider an upgrade. Our router buying guide can help you decide what will work best for you, and there are several solid options for different budgets in our Best Wi-Fi Routers guide. It's better to spend \$100 on a new router than on a Wi-Fi extender for an old or poor-quality router.

Buy a mesh: You will likely need to spend a bit more, but mesh systems are becoming more affordable. They offer a main router and one or more nodes or satellites to place around your home. They are very easy to set up and you can always add more nodes later. Mesh systems are smarter than extenders, creating a single optimized network throughout your home that passes off connections efficiently as you move around. While there is a speed drop between the main router and nodes (unless you connect them via Ethernet cable), it is far smaller than with extenders. There are several options in our Best Mesh Wi-Fi Routers guide.

When to Use a Wi-Fi Extender

The one scenario where you might be best buying a Wi-Fi extender is when you have a specific dead spot in your home where you want to improve download speeds. For example, the TV in the back room keeps buffering when you are trying to watch Netflix. I don't recommend using Wi-Fi extenders where upload speeds and latency are important, such as for online gaming or video calls.

How to Choose a Wi-Fi Extender

It's important to match the features of your router with your Wi-Fi extender to get the most from it. If you have a dual-band Wi-Fi 6 router, for example, get a dual-band Wi-Fi 6 extender. For easy setup and configuration, wherever possible, opt for an extender that is the same brand as your router. Some extenders offer mesh-like capabilities when paired with the right routers (though proper mesh systems always perform better).

If your extender has an Ethernet port and access point mode, it offers more options and may still prove useful if you move homes or change your setup. That said, the more features and the better the performance, the higher the price.

I have tested the following devices, and they are probably the best Wi-Fi extenders if you're determined to buy one:

Netgear EAX15 for \$100: This dual-band Wi-Fi 6 extender was easy to set up and uses your existing network name. It has a Gigabit Ethernet port and supports access point mode. It offered strong performance on the 5-GHz band at relatively close range, making it perfect for a problem dead spot or room.

Linksys RE7310 for \$100: Folks with a Linksys router should consider this bulky dual-band Wi-Fi 6 extender. It also uses your existing network details, though it lacks an Ethernet port. It offers decent range and speeds for an extender.

TP-Link RE715X for \$120: Top of the test table, this dual-band Wi-Fi 6 extender was the fastest at close range on the 5-GHz band and had the best range. It also has a Gigabit Ethernet port, supports access point mode, and can form a mesh with any other OneMesh TP-Link router. Note: the US government is investigating TP-Link and considering a router ban after its devices were targeted in cyberattacks linked to the Chinese government.

Before you bite on any of these extenders, the **Asus RT-AX57 Go is my favorite router**, and it costs \$100. It has both a repeater mode and access point mode, and it supports AiMesh, enabling you to create a mesh if you have an Asus router. You can also use it on the go to secure public Wi-Fi, tether a 4G or 5G mobile hot spot or phone, or plug into an office or hotel internet connection via Ethernet. It is a far more versatile option than a standard extender.

How to Get the Most From a Wi-Fi Extender

If you opt for a Wi-Fi extender, think carefully about placement. It's crucial that your extender is not just within range of your main router but has a strong signal to repeat. If you place it on the edge of your current Wi-Fi network you won't get good speeds. Rather than the back room you are trying to improve, consider the hallway outside, closer to your main router but not too close (perhaps halfway between), for best results. You can always test different locations to find the sweet spot. And if the extender has antennas, try moving them around to get the best signal.



PHOTOGRAPH: SIMON HILL

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