

MountainBox iDiG 2.0 vs. the Over-The-Counter Routers

There are many reasons why one would go with an over the counter router you could buy just about everywhere these days. The reality is you're missing out on a lot of the features and most importantly, performance. Most people buy a relatively cheap router which is aptly marketed as a firewall, but the reality is they have limited functionality. This functionality can hurt you in the long-run as your business grows, as your needs progress, and so forth.

This article discusses the differences from both a business and technical point of view. Let's start with business.

Business

1. Return on Investment. Most of these cheap routers don't give you the ability to monitor what your employees are doing. This is important. There is very little need to go to YouTube, Netflix, Facebook, and pornographic sites. Don't fool yourself; if you could see what your employees were doing, you would be appalled. You have the ability to selectively block these sites.

2. VPN: Most of these routers don't support VPN functionality. What exactly is a VPN? The ability for your customers or employees to access systems you need them to access from home, the field, and elsewhere. This is a very powerful tool. Imagine making a sale without your salespeople having to go back to the office to do an invoice, or to collect a down-payment.

3. Intrusion Detection: Wouldn't you like to know when someone is trying to break into your network? Be it an ex co-worker, hacker, or competitor? Not only will a real router stop it, but it will allow you to be notified and see what happened, from where, and in many cases, by whom.

4. Hosting your own server / website. Did you know that with a proper firewall, you can host a server or website from your work / home? This saves on that monthly fee you won't have to worry about.

5. Allow your employees to work from home securely. This goes back to VPN, but now we're talking something a little different - Site-to-Site VPNs. Imagine a salesperson across the country completely connected to your network securely from their home office. I don't know about you, but having access to the fileserver, SharePoint, etc. could prove to be a very important issue. You can even give them a Voice over IP phone and they could have their own extension i.e. 3 digit dialling to an employee across the country or the World with no telephone costs!

6. You could even monitor the remote worker's workday and what they've been doing while they're working. I'd like to think that's important.

These are just some of the business reasons to have a MountainBox firewall. They will increase your security and most importantly, your Return On Investment (ROI). You could see the savings easily within a year.

Technical Advantages

Cheap routers are exactly that. They're cheap. They have a life of 1-3 years (if you're lucky). They don't perform the way they're supposed to perform. In other words, there are a lot of limitations to them.

1. They can slow down your internet. If you have a higher speed internet, there are things you need to understand. These routers are built with the absolute bare minimum. What do I mean by that? The slowest CPU that will do the job. It's a one-size fits all solution and that means a lot of services won't work reliably as well as the potential to give you 1-2 Mbps when you have 5 Mbps upstream and 10 Mbps when you have 25 Mbps Downstream.

2. They can't be backed up. They're pretty much disposable devices. Warranty support? It's non-existent. If you don't mind your employees spending hours on hold to get an answer that probably won't solve your situation, then go ahead,

but even the cheapest Tech Guy charges a lot per hour. So have him in for 2-3 hours and you're talking thousands to fix something that never needed fixing.

3. The ability to head off nasty viruses before they get to your employee computers. Now you have to pay for your tech person to rebuild your server or employee computer. This will cost you in time, productivity, and cost. A good firewall will have the ability to stop these things before they get to your network. Last I checked no other device on the market like a Linksys, D-Link, or Netgear could do this.

4. What about the ability to use a Cell Phone's Internet connection when your primary internet provider goes down? MountainBox can do this. I don't know of many other devices that can these days.

5. How about giving your customers that visit your office the ability to access wireless internet without compromising network security and safety? MountainBox can do this. Very few other routers can.

6. Quality of Service. If you're an adopter of Voice over IP technology, Asterisk, etc. to help save on your phone bills (and I'm talking saving 90-100%), you can end the choppiness that comes with the telephone calls by prioritizing traffic on your network. This works with Skype as well.

7. Bandwidth abuse: When an employee decides to illegally download files (piracy, movies, etc.), you can stop this with a MountainBox. Ordinary routers can't. What does that mean for you? Legal liability. You can protect yourself from being sued by the music and movie studios. Is that important to you? How about when an employee downloads or uploads a large file and it slows down everyone's internet? MountainBox can stop that by throttling the connection and distributing the bandwidth available equally giving everyone a great experience.

Conclusion

These are just some of the many merits of using a MountainBox as a firewall.

We also have some other wonderful features that can help your business. Our advice is always free and we'll always come in on budget.