

Simulation and performance evaluation of IEEE802.11 WLAN under different operating conditions

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ABSTRACT

A wireless local area network (WLAN) based on IEEE802.11 protocol is the essential part for connection to the internet .and it is widely used in our life today and tomorrow. The growth in the number of nodes per small area likes home, office, and so on. This increase in density led to the degradation in performance in terms of throughput and delay experienced by the end-users. So many amendments proposed in order to improve the performance. Then the performance evaluation of WLAN is an important research topic. In this paper, the performance of WLAN working at 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz assessed in a home-like area under the widely used applications the assessment is in terms of throughput and delay. The evaluation conducted by using the optimum networks (OPNET) 14.5 modeler simulator. In this work, we concluded that: using a single AP showed degradation in performance due to congestion. Because all nodes use the same transmission channel which showed clearly in the case of the data rate of 6 Mbps in both (a and g) standards. The effectiveness is about (1.1%, 1.3%) respectively. While using two APs improves the performance for the same case to about (28% and 65%) since it mitigates the congestion because each AP uses a different communication channel.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A wireless local area network (WLAN) is an adaptable data communication system used as an extension of the wired local area network (LAN) in buildings and campuses. A WLAN sends and collects data wirelessly, reducing the need for wired connections. Therefore, WLAN integrates data connectivity with user mobility [1], [2]. The 802.11 research group was established as part of the IEEE802 project to create an international standard for WLANs [3], [4]. WLAN allows devices to make a connection wirelessly to the LAN using a radio transmission to share applications, data, and other resources. It can also move from one location to another via the network [5]. The standard for WLAN communication is wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi). The IEEE 802.11 standard is one of the most widely utilized wireless data transfer methods today. Because of the demand for data rates at high speeds, several standards established to satisfy customers' requirements. As in [6], [7] Table 1 shows the most commonly used protocols [8], [9].

The industrial, scientific, and medical (ISM) band's 2.400–802.11b, 802.11g, and the low-frequency section of 802.11n use a 2.500 GHz spectrum. The 802.11n, 802.11a, and 802.11ac protocols employ the 4.915–5.825 GHz spectrum, which is more regulated. They are called also “2.4 GHz and 5 GHz frequency bands” and are commonly referred to as such. Each of these spectrums is divided into channels with a center frequency and bandwidth, similar to how the commercial spectrum is divided. Beginning with channel 1,

which is centered on 2.412 GHz, the 2.4 GHz band is divided into 14 channels, each spaced 5 MHz apart in Figure 1. Because of differences in regulations between nations, the number of channels in the 5.725–5.875 GHz spectrum is less intuitive [9].

Table 1. IEEE 802.11 PHY standards

Release date	Standard	Frequency band (GHz)	Bandwidth (MHz)	Modulation	Advanced antenna technologies	Maximum data rate
1997	802.11	2.4	20	DSSS, FHSS	N/A	2 Mbits/s
1999	802.11 b	2.4	20	DSSS	N/A	11 Mbits/s
1999	802.11 a	5	20	OFDM	N/A	54 Mbits/s
2003	802.11 g	2.4	20	OFDM, DSSS	N/A	54 Mbits/s
2009	802.11 n	2.4, 5	20, 40	OFDM	MIMO, up to 4 spatial streams	600 Mbits/s
2013	802.11 ac	5	40, 80, 160	OFDM	MIMO, MU-MIMO, up to 8 spatial streams	6.93 Gbits/s

IEEE 802.11 is a significant WLAN standard that uses the logical link control (LLC) protocol, which is separated into sub-layers, the medium access control (MAC) layer, and the physical layer (PHY). This arrangement offers optimized functionality to wireless communication. First 802.11 consists of two physical layers, a direct sequence spread spectrum (DSSS) and a frequency hopping spread spectrum (FHSS), then the physical layer is classified into three types with different frequency spectrums and physical characteristics. The physical characteristic of the 802.11a and the 802.11g are the same. They are both orthogonal frequency division multiplexing-based (OFDM-based) and have a data throughput of 54 Mbps. While they operate on different frequency bands, 802.11a uses the 5 GHz band while 802.11g uses the 2.4 GHz band. 802.11a has a lot of advantages due to its huge range spectrum of 5 GHz, which has a greater number of free channels. The development of WLANs offers the support to a huge range of applications, maybe a simple application like file transferring (FTP), web browsing hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP), the email, or other applications, like the applications of the real-time multimedia (e.g., the video conferencing and the video streaming) [10].

On the other hand, this growth in the usage of such types of networks increases their density. Moreover, this increase in density led to degradation in their performance. There is a lot of research that tackles this problem and studies the performance of WLAN. Alisa [10] intends to improve the delay by transmission rate increasing. In addition, improve the throughput, by tuning the generation of data. The authors concluded that on a virtual local area network (VLAN) wireless network, there is a degradation in performance when the number of workstations is increasing [11]. They study the impact of increasing wireless node density on IEEE 802.11 to result that with an increasing number of nodes, the MAC delay increases [12]. Amewuda *et al.* [13] evaluate the station density effect in a network per access point [14]. Try to understand the effect of inter-cell interference in such high-density WLANs as a systematic analysis. According to [15], the increasing demand for capacity and coverage has resulted in multiple generations of IEEE 802.11 WLAN standards and the deployment of even more access points (APs). With the help of OPNET modeler and the usage of important performance measures such as throughput, average delay, and load data, they examined and evaluated the effect of the amount of traffic on the wireless network [8], [16]. The authors concluded that the amount of traffic load related to its delay time.

Our work is unique in that it proposes an examination of the disadvantages of using a single AP (the traditional WLAN configuration) by adding another AP and improving the WLAN from end to end. The development of new (and more complex) standards, as well as the densification of WLANs, both causes a slew of performance issues. WLAN performance evaluation will remain an important research topic for years to come, given the growing popularity of wireless communications.

In this paper, the evaluation of the performance of 802.11 a, g WLAN is the primary goal of the proposed work. It's trying to study one protocol that works on 5GHz and another one that works on 2.4 GHz, in some use cases that exhibit dense nodes, which are represented in-home to match with the recent changes, we have experienced during the Corona pandemic period, have led to an urgent need for advanced technology. People to do their work at home without the need to go to their offices under most used applications like HTTP browsing, file transferring using FTP, video conferencing, and email. The performance was evaluated in terms of throughput, load, and end-to-end delay. The 802.11 WLAN is infrastructure-based using distributed coordination function (DCF) with single and multi-AP with different operating parameters for the purpose of comparison. OPNET 14.5 modeler was used to simulate the network setup. There are various scenarios in the simulation. Every scenario is distinct from the others, either in terms of physical layer technology, transmission rate, or data creation pace.

2. METHOD

2.1. Infrastructure based WLAN

A broadcast domain is a LAN in which all connected devices are in the same physical LAN without the use of a router [17]. Infrastructure mode and Ad-hoc mode are the two operating modes defined by the 802.11 communications standard [18]. Wireless hosts can connect with each other, as shown in Figure 1(a) in infrastructure mode, using access points, which is often the default mode [19]. Without an access point, in a peer-to-peer network, wireless hosts can connect directly with one another. As shown in Figure 1(b). The Adhoc network is a brief network connection that allows hosts to communicate data directly to other hosts rather than traveling through an access point.

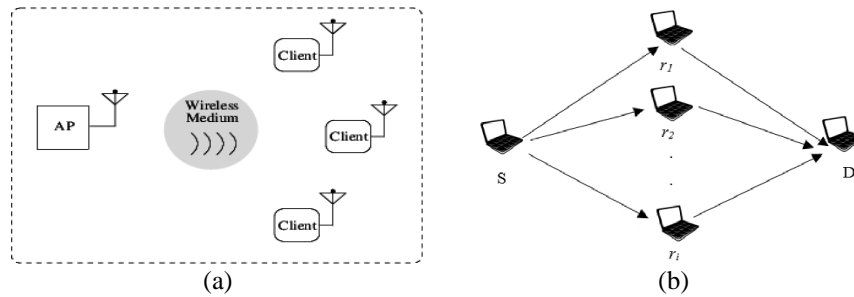


Figure 1. The WLAN 802.11 operating modes (a) infrastructure operating mode and (b) ad hoc operating mode

2.2. OPNET network simulator

The modeler OPNET is a trademark of OPNET Technologies. It offers a virtual environment for modeling, analyzing, and predicting the performance of most of the applications, networking technologies, and servers [16]. OPNET edition offered free software to all the students and university staff. However, the commercial version of OPNET (modeler) has wider capabilities designed for enterprise IT, documentation, environment, and professional support [20]. The OPNET provides the chance to design and study networks, protocols, devices, and applications with considerable flexibility [21]. It was intended in the basic package to simulate the network communication and to develop the protocols and devices [22].

2.3. Simulation model

On the OPNET 14.5 simulator, simulation creation and analysis were carried out, which provided a real-world network scenario, implementation, and outcomes utilizing multiple metrics. This paper examines the impact of using one and two routers to solve the problem of increasing the density of nodes in the use case and enhance wireless LAN throughput and delay under DCF channel occupancy shown in Figure 2. In Figure 3 the simulation model is shown, which consist the WLAN infrastructure that is made up of access points and stations of wireless and it can handle a large number depending on the access point's specifications, of a wireless station. Aunshielded twisted pair (UTP) cable can connect the wireless network to the Ethernet network for the distance between the AP and the switch or hub can be up to 100 meters [19]. Using service set identifier (SSID), the mobile station while communicating can move and search and connect automatically to the access point device, which is the wireless network's unique name that corresponds to the AP defined in the application. The SSID keeps packets in the right WLAN.

2.4. The performance metrics

This study considers the three important performance criteria listed below. For network evaluation:

- a. Throughput: the packet delivery ratio is the average data packet rate that each node in the network sends and receives correctly, as shown in (1). Bits per second are the unit of measurement. When it comes to wireless networks, a greater throughput value equates to better performance [17], [19], [23].

$$\text{Throughput} = \frac{\text{noofsuccessfultransmittedpackets} \cdot \text{packetlength}(\text{bit})}{\text{Time}(\text{sec})} \tag{1}$$

$$\text{Throughput DCF} = (\text{MPDU size} [\text{MPDU size} + \text{MAC header size}]) * (\text{TMPDU, MAC} / [\text{TDIFS} + \text{TBACK OFF} + \text{TPOH} + \text{TMPDU, MAC} + \text{TSIFS} + \text{TACK}]) * \text{Data Rate} \tag{2}$$

Figure 2 illustrates (2) by showing channel occupancy periods in DCF with DSSS PHY mode and 512-byte MPDU size. This equation would be (data rate=11 Mbps) and (MPDU size=512 bytes) if the values

given in Figure 2 were replaced. When using (data rate=2Mbps) and (MPDU size=512 bytes) in (2), the DCF effectiveness is around 31%. With packet lengths, fewer than 1500 bytes, access to the DCF channel is nearly worthless.

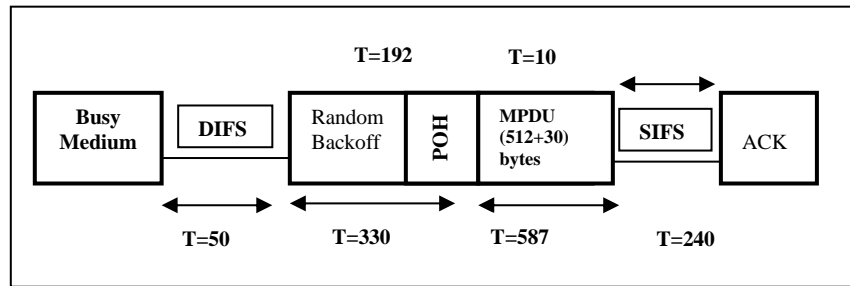


Figure 2. Under DCF channel occupancy times [23]

- b. Load: is an important metric for analyzing network performance in large-scale wireless sensor networks, which are projected to serve pervasive applications such as personalized health care, smart cities, and smart homes, among others [24].
- c. Delay: the amount of time it takes for a packet from a source node to arrive at its destination. It's measured in seconds, with a lower number suggesting better results [18], [23].

2.5. Simulation setup

We analyze the home applications shown in Table 2, by applying three heavy applications, which can be selected from the application definition attributes. Furthermore, we must identify apps and profiles before connecting the workstation to the profiles. We create two types of scenarios to analyze these applications, the first one with one access point as shown in Figure 3(a) and the second one with two access points shown in Figure 3(b), to compare their effectiveness ratio shown in Table 3, and to compare results in different data rate (6, 36, and 54) for each types of standards (a,g) shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 2. Applications used for load generation

Application	Attribute	Value1	Value2
Http	Command mix (Get/total)	50%	
	Inter-request time (seconds)	Exponential (3)	
	File size (bytes)	Constant (50000)	
FTP	Page interval time(seconds)	Exponential (5)	Page interval time(seconds)
	Page properties	Large image	Page properties
	Server selection	Page per server	Exponential (10)
Video conference	Frame interval time information (seconds)	15 frames/sec	
	Frame size information(bytes)	128*240pixels	

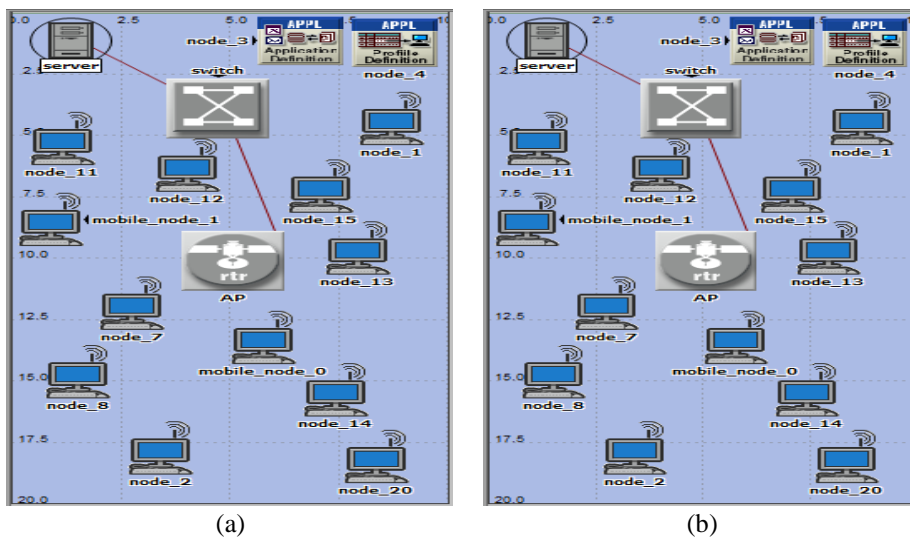


Figure 3. Simulation topologies (a) topology for first scenario and (b) topology for the second scenario

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to conduct a simulation study, we used a square space of 10m x 10m. There were two situations created:

3.1. The first scenario (with a single access point)

As shown in Figure 3(a), the setup implies that one server and one switch are linking one sector with one access point. The simulation models use 12 nodes, each of which is wirelessly connected to the access point via a particular basic service set (BSS) and is randomly placed within a 200m square region. The IEEE 802.11 a and g MAC protocols, which allow wireless communication at up to 54Mbps [25], were originally utilized as the MAC protocol. Will use it in three steps (6, 36, 54) consecutively. The nodes were, connected to the access point wirelessly; the access points 1 and the server both were, connected to the switch by 100Base-T. Table 4 and Table 5 show the wireless LAN throughput, load, and delay for different numbers of nodes and different transmission rates. As we can see in Figure 4(a) the wireless LAN throughput, load, and delay for different numbers of nodes with 6 MHZ protocol g, and Figure 4(b) shows the wireless LAN throughput, load, and delay for different numbers of nodes with 6 MHZ protocol a. Moreover, according to the effectiveness ratio shown in Table 3 we found that the standard g ratio (1.3) is a little more than the standard a ratio (1.1) and that's because a is 2.4 MHz while g is a 5 MHz frequency band which means more free channels lads to less congestion.

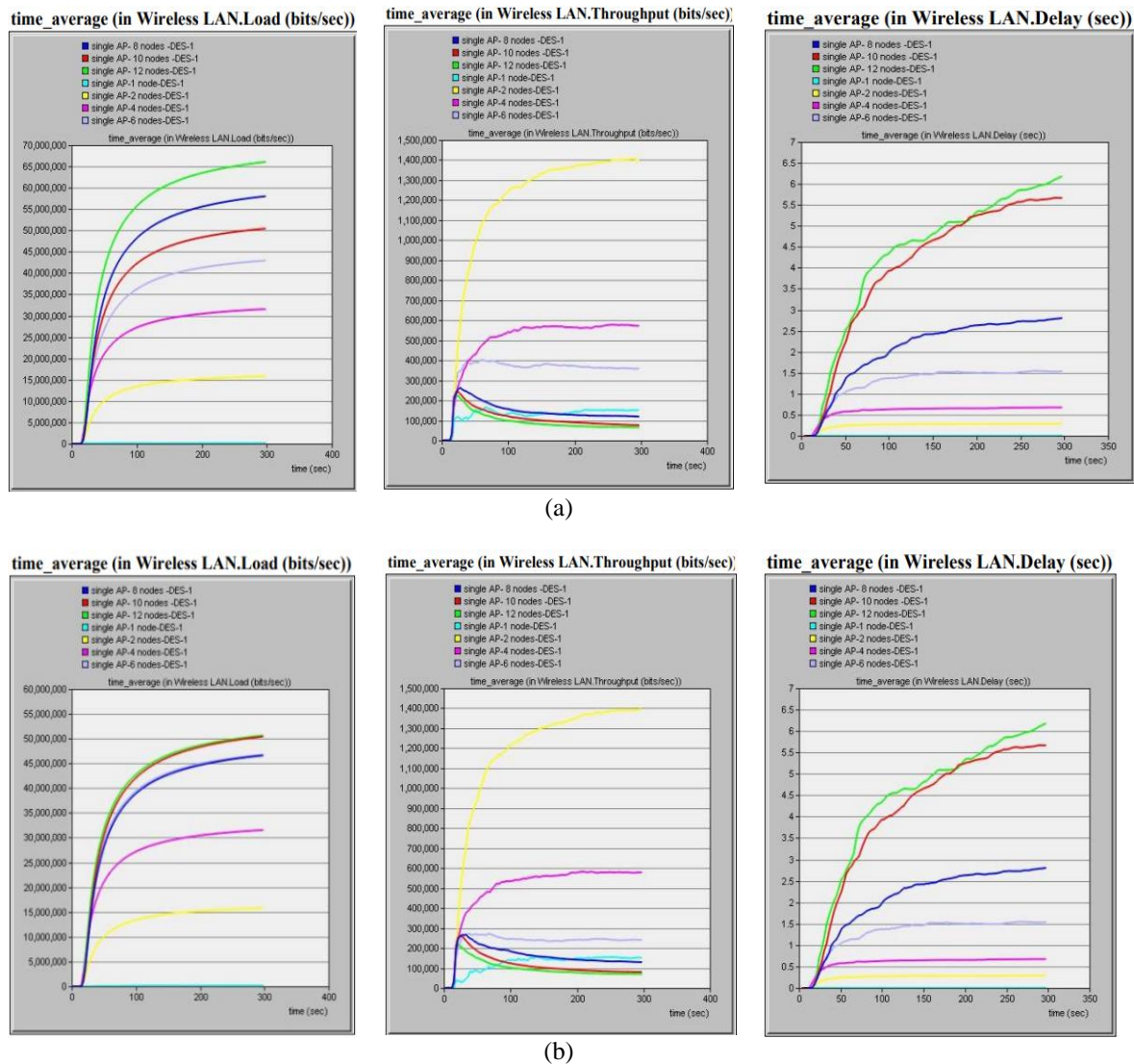


Figure 4. A sample for the performance for single AP (a) performance of IEEE 802.11g protocol, 6 MHz and (b) performance of IEEE 802.11a protocol, 6 MHz

Table 3. Effectiveness ratio

Standards	Transmission ratebits/s	12 nodes	Effectiveness ratio (%)
IEEE 802.11 a	6 M	Single AP	1.1
		Double AP	28
IEEE 802.11 g		Single AP	1.3
		Double AP	65

Table 4. IEEE 802.11a performance under different conditions

standards	Transmission rate bits/s	No of nodes	Load bits/s	Throughput bits/s	Delay (s)
IEEE 802.11a	6 M	2	16 M	1.4 M	0.25
		4	32 M	585 K	0.7
		6	43 M	360 K	1
		8	58 M	120 K	3
		10	50M	90 K	5.25
		12	66 M	68 K	6.1
	36 M	2	15 M	7.1 M	0.025
		4	31 M	4.4 M	0.9
		6	44 M	2.5 M	0.16
		8	50 M	1.5 M	0.25
		10	78 M	1 M	0.37
		12	70 M	1.21 M	0.31
	54 M	2	15 M	8.5 M	0.02
		4	32 M	7.5 M	0.05
		6	44 M	4.4 M	0.09
		8	50 M	1.5 M	0.25
		10	74.5 M	1.5 M	0.24
		12	74.8 M	1.77 M	0.22

Table 5. IEEE 802.11g performance under different conditions

standards	Transmission rate bits/s	No of nodes	Load bits/s	Throughput bits/s	Delay (s)
IEEE 802.11 g	6 M	2	16 M	1.4 M	0.25
		4	32 M	590 K	0.7
		6	47 M	250 K	1.5
		8	47 M	130 K	2.8
		10	50M	90 K	5.6
		12	50M	80 K	6.2
	36 M	2	15 M	8.1 M	0.025
		4	31 M	4.4 M	0.9
		6	44 M	2.1 M	0.19
		8	50 M	2 M	0.19
		10	75 M	1 M	0.37
		12	67 M	1 M	0.44
	54 M	2	15 M	8.5 M	0.02
		4	32 M	7 M	0.35
		6	46 M	3 M	0.13
		8	55 M	2.5 M	0.16
		10	66 M	1.4 M	0.29
		12	75 M	1.6 M	0.26

3.2. The second scenario with (multiple access points)

In this scenario, the setup assumes that there are one server and one switch, and two Access points shown in Figure 3(b). The simulation models use 12 nodes, each containing six nodes wirelessly connected to an AP using a unique BSS and in a random way placed within a 200m square region. The channel that APs use is chosen automatically. Table 6 and Table 7 shows throughput, load, and delay for 12 nodes under different transmission rates for both the single AP used in the first scenario and the two APs used in this scenario with protocol a and g sequentially. The nodes are, wirelessly connected to the access points. Access points 1 and 2 and the server are connected to the switch by 100 base-T. Here is the effectiveness ratio shown in Table 3 we found that the standard g ratio (65) is greater than the standard a ratio (28) for the same reason. In addition, we can see clearly the improvement in performance when using two access points, by comparing the ratios for a and g in the two scenarios.

Table 6. IEEE 802.11a performance comparison

standards	Transmission rate bits/s	12 nodes	Load bits/s	Throughput bits/s	Delay (s)
IEEE 802.11a	6 M	single AP	66 M	68 K	6.1
		double AP	64 M	1.68 M	0.62
	36 M	single AP	70 M	1.21M	0.32
		double AP	89 M	1.92 M	0.63
	54 M	single AP	74.8 M	1.77 M	0.22
		double AP	100.4 M	31 M	0.38

Table 7. IEEE 802.11g performance comparison

standards	Transmission ratebits/s	12 nodes	Load bits/s	Throughput bits/s	Delay (s)
IEEE 802.11 g	6 M	single AP	50 M	80 K	6.2
		double AP	77 M	3,9 M	0.49
	36 M	single AP	67 M	1 M	0.44
		double AP	95 M	22.1 M	0.064
	54 M	single AP	75 M	1.6 M	0.26
		double AP	86 M	21.5 M	0.042

4. CONCLUSION

From the simulation results for the single AP and bit rate of 6 Mbps, we noticed that the throughput is decreased as the number of nodes increases and the delay is increased. For 2 nodes the throughput is 1.4Mbps and the delay is 0.25sec this performance can be accepted for the home-like applications. However, for the 12-node case, the throughput of 68kps and delay of 6.1 sec can be assigned as degradation in performance. This degradation is due to the congestion that occurs because all nodes use the same transmission channel. This is for both types a and g. for 36Mbps and 54 Mbps bitrates. When using two APs the performance is improved. This improvement is because each AP uses a different transmission channel selected from the non-overlapped channels for both the 2.4G and 5G spectrum.




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