



## NETWORK REVIEWS

### D-LINK DIR-826L Cloud Gigabit Router N600

**COMPUTER SHOPPER** ★★★★★  
**BUDGET BUY** £53 inc VAT • From [www.scan.co.uk](http://www.scan.co.uk)

#### VERDICT

The DIR-826L is a bargain router with good Wi-Fi performance

**THE DIR-826L CLOUD** Gigabit Router N600 is an 802.11n dual-band wireless router with four Gigabit Ethernet ports and a USB port to which you can attach USB drives. As it's a D-Link 'cloud' router, you can access, configure and view media stored on your router over the internet when away from home. You can even download iOS and Android apps to make the most of the router.

One such app is QRS Mobile, which lets you run the DIR-826L's set up wizard from the comfort of your own tablet. The app has a clear, uncluttered interface and is a neat way of configuring your internet connection, wireless security and web interface password. Sadly, that's all QRS Mobile does. We'd prefer it to provide access to all controls as well, not just a setup wizard.

Should you want to configure the DIR-826L further, you must log in to its web interface. The organisation of its web interface

built-in Wi-Fi adaptor on the 2.4GHz band. We achieved speeds of 43.4Mbit/s at one metre, 41.4Mbit/s at 10 metres and 20Mbit/s at 25 metres. These aren't the fastest speeds, but they're good, and similar to the more expensive TP-Link WDR4300's (see *Reviews, Shopper 301*) speeds of 38.6Mbit/s at one metre, 41.5Mbit/s at 10 metres and 19.2Mbit/s at 25 metres.

When we used D-Link's own DWA-182 USB Wi-Fi adaptor and connected on the 2.4GHz band we achieved speeds of 78.8Mbit/s at one metre, 76.6Mbit/s at 10 metres and 11.8Mbit/s at 25 metres. The first two speeds are respectable, but the last shows a big drop in transfer speed at 25 metres.



users, set permissions for them and give them home folders.

We had no trouble accessing the media on our attached USB drive. We could stream HD video to our iPad at 25 metres comfortably on the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands. There was no stuttering as it buffered, which meant we could enjoy our videos without interruption.

Curiously, the DIR-826L doesn't have a built-in media server. You can stream media using the SharePort Mobile app, but you have problems if you want to stream media to a PC.

#### CLOUD SURFING

The DIR-826L lets you provide cloud services for your users without having to configure many settings. Once you've registered your router with the Mydlink website using the wizard in the DIR-826L's web interface, you can access the router's web interface and attached storage over the internet.

The DIR-826L provides good Wi-Fi speeds, some advanced options and a decent, if basic, selection of mobile apps. D-Link's web interface could be better organised, and its mobile apps need to offer more options if it's to be as user-friendly and useful as D-Link would like it to be, but it's a likeable router. It's a bargain buy if you want a cheap router with decent short-range Wi-Fi performance.

Andrew Unsworth

“As the DIR-826L is a D-Link 'cloud' router, you can access, configure and view media stored on your router over the internet when away from home”

can be confusing, and it takes a while to know where to look for settings you want to alter. It may be inexpensive, but the DIR-826L has many useful features such as port forwarding and QoS settings. It even has website filtering to prevent network users visiting certain sites.

#### SPEED TEST

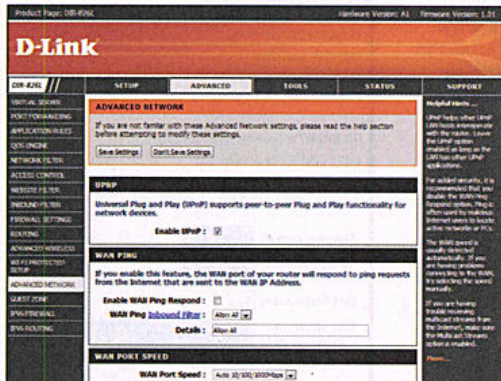
To test the DIR-826L's data transfer speeds, we first connected to it using our Centrino's

As the DIR-826L's a dual-band router, we connected to it on the 5GHz band using our Centrino's built-in Wi-Fi adaptor and got data transfer speeds of 93.2Mbit/s at one metre, 83.6Mbit/s at 10 metres and 8.5Mbit/s at 25 metres. There's a big drop in transfer speed at 25 metres, but the former are good and very similar to those of Asus's more expensive RT-N66U.

When we connected to it on the 5GHz band using the DWA-182 Wi-Fi dongle, we achieved data transfer speeds of 126.5Mbit/s at one metre, 109.8Mbit/s at 10 metres and 25.7Mbit/s at 25 metres. These are quick speeds that can easily stream your media.

#### MEDIA FRIENDLY?

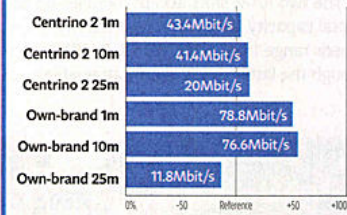
The DIR-826L has a single USB connection for external storage, which you can share on your network. The media on the drive can be accessed via a web browser, your operating system's file system browser or a mobile app. The DIR-826L's web interface lets you create



↑ The DIR-826L's web interface could be better organised

#### SPECIFICATIONS

**WIRELESS STANDARD** 802.11n dual band (300Mbit/s)  
**CONNECTIONS** 4x 10/100/1000Mbit/s LAN ports, 1x WAN port  
**FEATURES** UPnP, QoS  
**DIMENSIONS** 145x93x111mm  
**POWER CONSUMPTION** 5W on  
**WARRANTY** Two-year RTB  
**PART CODE** DIR-826L  
**DETAILS** [www.dlink.co.uk](http://www.dlink.co.uk)



See page 76 for performance details