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Review of the Intertex IX66+PF DSL Modem

For December we tested Intertex's IX66+PF DSL modem. The question coming into this review was, "the spec sheet on this DSL modem is pretty loaded with all kinds of features/gadgets/cool technology. Can it be true that it can be a swiss army knife of DSL modems??"

This Intertex modem is a very small unit, much smaller than the standard Alcatel, and Speedstream DSL modems. Nice compact design, nothing flashy, nice small LED's that are ledgible on the front. There is a nice LED screen as well, which is nice, shows the security setting. The back of the unit is equally well laid out. Yes there is a power button! The layout for the USB, 2 ethernet ports, analog phone port and DSL rj11 phone line jack are nicely laid out as well. Nice simple straight forward design, and well labelled (much better than the netopia design). The whole line of Intertex DSL modems share the same basic chassis/case, with the appropriate jacks punched out at the back. Sorry I didn't take it apart like most of the other modems I've tested... (it's not nice to send back a product to the manufacturer in parts) so I can't give you the low down on what it looks like inside, but I suspect it to be a nice compact design.

The instructions are pretty easy and straight forward. Nice simple clean crisp instructino manual, well done. Nothing fancy, just clear concise instructions. The [Intertex Support Site](#) is pretty good, lots of useful informatino, drivers, manuals and a good question and answer section. I especially like the "SIP" section, very well done. Not many know about SIP so it's nice to see a plain english section describing SIP.

With easy to follow instructions this should be an easy modem/router to configure right? Well it wasn't too hard for me to configure, but for the average SOHO user or residential DSL user, it would be difficult since there are things your ISP knows that you as an end user wouldn't (VPI/VCI etc.). This little router can essentially be taken anywhere in the world and it will work (except that you need power adapters for certain countries). I was very impressed by the number of already preset options for different DSL providers, very good job.. The one thing I would of liked to see would of been a little "quick start" script that just prompts the user for information, and does the configuration from there... That would be a good feature for the residential market, although for the ISP market where you have highly skilled network admins configuring routers for corporate DSL customers, it really doesn't mean a lot.. Nice feature but not a necessity. I'm quite sure for a large ISP, Intertex could ship them routers with a stripped down software version, essentially just what they need and no extra settings for other ISP's.

As to performance, nice fast speeds, nice solid connections, and to top it off my favorite feature, Line speed indicator! I love router companies who include this option, it really shows a well designed, well engineered product when you get features like this included. The Intertex, much like the King of the Hill **Cisco 827** doesn't just show the line speed, it also shows the attenuation and all kinds of other information only an electrical engineer would understand. With the security setting set to high, I did notice ICQ and MSN messenger having an issue connecting, but no big deal, you shouldn't be chatting on MSN or ICQ while at work eh?? Somewhat related, I would not suggest changing the security settings on the router while you have some telnet or SSH sessions open, I did that and killed my sessions and had to reestablish the sessions, no big deal. With many routers on the market you don't get much in terms of access lists and logging but with the Cisco 827 and this Intertex router you get some good debugging and logging, which is great! You can even export to a syslog server, that amazed me, nicely engineered. Only one knock against this router, I couldn't find an SNMP section which surprised me.. It's either hidden or is set to some default.. I'm quite sure this router is SNMPable, I might give tech support a call and see what they say and add that into the review in a bit.

At the beginning of this review I asked if this can be a swiss army knife of DSL modems... Well my answer to that question is no, this is not a swiss army knife of modems, this is a full blown, fully capable router with a DSL modem built in. What sets this apart from routers is not just all the features and ease of use, but the overall well engineered design. At roughly \$399 (US dollars) this is much cheaper than the King of the Hill Cisco 827 to which the Intertex is comparable and can actually hold its own when compared head to head vs the Cisco 827. If this router was brought to market 2 years ago with a bit of marketing this product would of easily beat the likes of Netopia, Linksys, Netgear and SMC down in the competitive DSL CPE world, and yes it could of challenged Cisco in the DSL CPE market. Great well priced, well engineered little router, way to go!

Craig Stumpf

Mark Breakdown:

Category:	Comments:	Mark:
Performance:	Great performance!, built in security is a great feature. Power the unit up and it automatically connects, unlike the Netopia which won't dial until it sees traffic, this Intertex connects immediately.	45.5/50
Supportability:	Logging, access lists, and a good company support site, nice job.	13/15
Ease of Use/ Configuration:	This router comes standard with templates for many many large (mostly european ISP's), but it can be configured for any ISP on the planet with the right information. This may not be the easiest thing for someone new to setting up routers to do but nothing is ever easy the first time you do it anyway. Pretty good web based interface for configuring this router, not the best web interface in class but a pretty good design, a couple of small tweaks in making it more logical would be perfect.	6/10
Compatibility:	This router will work anywhere on the planet with any ISP and any IP network. USB and Ethernet connections make it even more versatile.	8/10
Features:	Do I have enough room in this section for features?? SIP (which I didn't even hardly say a thing about), the multiple interfaces (USB, Ethernet), seeing the line speed in the router, and all the usual, NAT, DHCP, DMZ etc.. make this one feature packed loaded router.	4.5/5
Personal:	I opened the box up thinking I was testing and reviewing a simple DSL modem, boy was I wrong. This is no DSL modem, this is a full blown DSL router, and not a simple SOHO or residential router like a linksys, but this router has shown it can run with the leaders in the DSL CPE router market.	8/10



Overall:

Well designed, well built, well thought out product. Intertex did not just do their homework and copy other routers in their market segment, they went and built an exceptionally well priced, feature laden product. Good Job. **85/100**