

Eero mesh Wi-Fi 6 hardware test results have been spotted at the FCC

Enlarge / We expect the new Eero Pro to look largely like the existing Eero Pro or the Amazon Eero units shown here.

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Tech blog Zatz Not Funny broke the news this weekend that Wi-Fi 6-enabled Eero hardware is at the FCC for testing and validation. Details on the new hardware are sketchy for the moment—Eero has requested confidentiality for most of the interesting data through March 10, 2021.

What we do know is that three devices under test are listed—an Eero Pro, Eero Gateway, and Eero Extender. All three are Wi-Fi 6 (802.11ax)-enabled parts. The Eero Pro is a tri-band design (one 2.4GHz radio and two 5GHz radios), similar to the current Eero Pro; the Gateway and Extender are dual-band designs differentiated by wired Ethernet ports—the Gateway has two, and the Extender has none.

Ars has reached out to Eero, with no response as of press time. All we know for sure is what limited nonconfidential data is available from RF testing at the FCC—Eero's site itself still simply says, "there is no timeline set for 802.11ax (also known as Wi-Fi 6) support."

Likely hardware form factors

- This photo of the bottom of one of the Wi-Fi 6 Eero devices, demonstrating where the FCC certification label will go, gives us an idea what the final devices will look like.
- The dual-band Gateway and Extender products look like they will be smaller and less square than the Pro.

Although very little of the FCC filing is publicly available, there is a photo for device-label placement on the Pro and a diagram for the Gateway and Extender showing us the undersides of the devices. In all likelihood, the Pro will strongly resemble one of the current-generation Pro or Amazon Eero devices; the dual-band Gateway and Extender models share a single diagram, which looks to be smaller and more oblong than the Pro.

Although the underside diagram for Gateway and Extender is shaped somewhat like the second-generation Beacon design, we don't see any plugs shown—so it seems unlikely that they will be wall-wart designs like the Beacon's or like Eero competitor Plume. We expect the new generation of devices will likely be desktop-style designs, with external power supplies.

Interoperability

In addition to the dual- and tri-band Wi-Fi 6 hardware, two of the three new devices offer BTLE (Bluetooth Low-Energy) and Zigbee radios. These protocols enable home automation connectivity and replace the Thread support offered by second-generation Eero hardware.

It's unclear whether the new generation Eero devices will continue to support Thread—both Thread and Zigbee are extensions of the underlying 802.15.4 wireless protocol. The FCC filing specifically mentioned Zigbee by name, but since

both protocols operate on the same spectrum, they would not likely require separate filings.

Similarly, we don't have concrete information on the interoperability of the new Wi-Fi 6-enabled Eero devices with the two older, Wi-Fi 5 generations—but based on Eero's history, we see no reason to suspect the company won't support mixing-and-matching as desired.

We'll update here if we receive additional information from contacts at Eero.

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