

Case Study

AirCheck G3



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- ✓ Review by a Real User
- ✓ Verified by PeerSpot

What is our primary use case?

We are a VAR, providing intermediary services and troubleshooting to customers. AirCheck is a tool we use for installing, testing, and troubleshooting Wi-Fi or wired networks. It's something we leverage while installing access points and identifying problems.

Our company has around a dozen AirCheck units shared by about three dozen engineers. Their roles range from sales and design to implementing and troubleshooting Wi-Fi networks. All the people using AirCheck on our teams are primarily focused on Wi-Fi, and AirCheck is an excellent tool for supporting those roles.

We use AirCheck as much as possible because we try to use technology relevant to our internal professional services. It's definitely a tool that we don't hesitate to invest in. Every once in a

while, we'll have to pick up another unit or two to backfill a new team or something along those lines. We've had some units break, and those need to be replaced, but those units have been abused, so I don't think that reflects the reliability of their devices. If it's dropped 300 feet onto concrete, we must buy a new one. We continue to invest in them. We continue to pay maintenance and support and love what NetAlly has been doing with them.

How has it helped my organization?

AirCheck allowed us to replace some lower-end tools from MetaGeek and other smaller players. We've consolidated a few entry-level tools from a couple of different vendors and two features out of a single product. This was a long time



ago, but AirCheck allowed us to give our engineers better tools. For example, a junior engineer might request a super-cheap spectrum analyzer, but we'll give them an AirCheck so they can see what a real tool looks like.

They're also affordable enough, so we can be casual with how we distribute them, while they're powerful enough to hold their own against some of the bigger tools. They consistently outperform entry-level tools.

Troubleshooting is often a process of elimination. In some situations, we use AirCheck to do packet captures and ensure the protocol functions properly over the air. Next, we use it to scan channels to see if the channel plan looks correct. We might use AirCheck to do a performance test to determine if there's anything ongoing. It allows us to test all these aspects of a Wi-Fi network, but it also gives us the next step. Once we've confirmed that the Wi-Fi is functioning correctly, we know there is no interference or channel overlap in the area.

If everything else is appropriately configured, the process of elimination prompts us to consider whether there's a bad cable. We can do that ourselves instead of engaging the cable vendor to get somebody on site to plug something into a cable and do a plant test. My engineer needs only to spend 15 or 20 seconds testing that cable. That potentially saves hundreds or even thousands of dollars depending on the location, union rules, etc.

Having that in-the-field ability to do that is invaluable. I am able to take that and then have

all of those tests roll up to the cloud so that it doesn't even need to be me on site doing the work. It allows me to put more junior resources on site. It will enable them to solve more problems than they would otherwise. As a manager and administrator, I get a holistic team view of what's happening in the field as my engineers are moving about troubleshooting and deploying wireless networks.

The auto-test feature enables us to distribute our staff resources more efficiently. Auto-test doesn't mean I can send anybody out into the field, but it certainly allows me to send someone who lacks the same comprehensive understanding of Wi-Fi that I or some of my peers have. It will enable us to send a junior engineer who can press one button to get feedback about what's happening. They can forward it to me through Link-Live, so I can assist them if necessary. They can see all sorts of data about what's not working correctly on the infrastructure, and it gives them a safety net.

If everything is good, and they're still having a problem, I can validate those assumptions that they have made. If they run into a problem identified by the auto test, they can call me for advice, or the auto test will point to what they need to do. It allows them not just to identify where that problem is coming from but also gives them actionable information they need to figure out the problem box.

It's just the "easy" button that allows us to build profiles to configure the tester, so our engineers don't have to fuss with building out the profiles



or how the test functions. I can give my engineers a straightforward tool, and that's the holy grail. The device is not only easy to use but also rich and comprehensive enough to provide meaningful data.

What is most valuable?

The auto-test, channel scanner, packet capture, and Link-Live integration are all crucial features we use regularly. The wired cable tester is also indispensable. We frequently run into problems during cable testing that are hard to pin down. When tracking down a cable problem, we usually need to plug something into the cable and ensure the cable plant is reliable.

Nothing else would work in those situations. A bad cable could affect performance in a number of ways, and troubleshooting Wi-Fi networks is complicated enough already. AirCheck G2 provides a simple-to-use tool that allows my field teams to plug an AP cable in, and I have a good idea whether that cable's problematic or not.

What needs improvement?

NetAlly has been behind the curve on visualization, Wi-Fi design, and heat maps for a little while now. They're perfectly aware of this deficiency, but what they offer is good enough for a lot of people. It's not suitable for larger shops, but it works in a pinch. The AirMapper and subsequent AirMagnet

integration is an afterthought.

For how long have I used the solution?

We have been using AirCheck products since they launched, so it has been many years. We transitioned from the first generation to G2 several years back.

What do I think about the stability of the solution?

We've never noticed stability issues. We don't pay attention to these things unless it's a significant problem. We've never had our production units break or die in the field. I think we still have original units around here. They're built like tanks.

How are customer service and support?

NetAlly support is highly responsive. They've always immediately addressed my concerns. I'd say their support is top-notch and it is 10 out of 10.

How would you rate customer service and support?

Positive



How was the initial setup?

AirCheck requires minimal setup. We fire up the unit and register it on the dashboard, which we would expect from any really cloud-enabled product. The firmware updates are all done on the device, and the units require minimal configuration. Any configuration we need to do is straightforward and easy to distribute to multiple devices. It's easy to make the changes and ensure that everybody's doing the same thing.

The Link-Live dashboard lets us keep the firmware revisions uniform across devices. We can see who is using them and when. It also allows us to understand the test results, so we can integrate them into other teams' work. The out-of-the-box setup was very straightforward. I think I had to type six numbers into a dashboard after I logged in. From there, everything is done on the dashboard or the device itself.

What's my experience with pricing, setup cost, and licensing?

AirCheck is appropriately priced as an enterprise-grade tool for professional work. It's not the most expensive tool in the industry, so it's more affordable than many other competitors in the market. Each unit is a couple of grand, which a large organization can absorb because we use these tools to benefit our customers in tangible ways.

Which other solutions did I evaluate?

Few products provide an all-in-one platform like AirCheck. A lot of companies have competing products that might address a feature or a use case, but no vendor has packaged all those features into a single product like NetAlly. For all intents and purposes, there's no competition in the space. No other enterprise-quality handheld testers do Wi-Fi and wired testing so comprehensively.

The phone apps are garbage. It's like comparing a BB gun to a bazooka now. Those consumer-grade mobile app tools are inconsistent, inaccurate, and unreliable.

What other advice do I have?

I rate AirCheck 10 out of 10. It's awesome. Consistent tools are critical. When we transitioned over to AirCheck, we had several tools from various vendors, and each engineer was doing something slightly different. AirCheck allowed us to standardize operations because everyone uses the same tools, so my engineers can learn from each other.



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