

PA-12 WLAN Troubleshooting with Wireshark and AirPcap Rolf Leutert, Leutert NetServices, Switzerland

Troubleshooting WLAN problems can be a very challenging task. The wireless media is known to be unreliable. Signal interferences, low signal areas or overloaded cells are just a few of possible issues.

In addition, the compatibility between the different IEEE standards and the vendor's way of implementation is not always granted.



Having so many factors potentially impacting the performance of a wireless LAN, a systematic root-cause analysis will be more promising than the trial and error method.



Frequently Asked Questions:

- Can I use my built-in WLAN NIC with Wireshark?
- Why would I need AirPcaps to analyze WLAN?
- Why are there different types of AirPcaps?
- Can I combine different types of AirPcaps?
- Can I use AirPcaps to join a WLAN?
- Will name resolution work with AirPcaps?
- Will AirPcaps show me Radio Interferences?
- How do I troubleshoot encrypted WLANs?

Capturing with built-in WLAN card



Frequently Given Answers:

• Yes you can use the built in WLAN NIC with Wireshark!

But with a lot of restrictions:

- No promiscuous mode, only the own traffic visible
- Frames will be displayed in Ethernet format
- No radio information like SNR, channel no, speed etc.
- One channel only, not suitable for roaming analysis

And the biggest limitation:

- No management or control frames visible!
- But these are the ones you need for troubleshooting

(Exception: under Linux some NICs support more features)

Capturing with built-in WLAN card

- Capturing on built in WLAN NIC will display Ethernet like frames
- Only Data frames and no Radio or WLAN header will be seen

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5	0	.199	9400	192.	168.0	0.217	224	.0.0.	252		LLMNR	66	Stand	lard	query
6	0	.107	7298	192.	168.0	0.201	224	.0.0.	252		LLMNR	66	Stand	dard	query
7	0	.001	1103	192.	168.0	0.217	224	.0.0.	252		LLMNR	66	Stand	lard	query
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9	0	.102	2408	192.	168.0	0.201	224	.0.0.	252		LLMNR	66	Stand	lard	query
10	0	.002	2094	192.	168.0	0.201	192	.168.	0.255		NBNS	92	Name	quer	Y NB
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Capturing with AirPcap Adapters



Frequently Given Answers:

- AirPcaps support the following features:
- Promiscuous mode, all traffic in a radio cell visible
- Frames will be displayed original WLAN format
- Lots of radio information like SNR, channel no, speed etc.
- Capturing in multiple channels with multiple adapters
- All frame types visible (Data, Management and Control)

Different AirPcap Adapters



AirPcap Classic 802.11b/g



AirPcap TX 802.11b/g + Frame injection



AirPcap NX 802.11a/b/g/n

Frequently Given Answers:

- Different AirPcaps for different 802.11 standards
- Different features at different costs
- Different AirPcaps can be combined together
- AirPcaps can not join a WLAN, are for capturing only
- Name resolution will not work for above reason
- Radio interferences can not be detected directly with AirPcaps
- Supported by all popular Windows versions up to Win7

New features within near future:

- 802.11ac standard support
- Win 8 drivers
- USB 3.0 support for NX (Classic and TX today)

Additional Wireshark Columns

- AirPcaps add a Radiotap Header with useful information to each captured frame
- Verify that the Radio option is turned on

		Advanced wireless settings		
*ArtPosp USB wireless capture adapter or 00 (Wireshark 110.0rc) of Fire Edit Varie Ge Contrare Analyse Statistics Talenborry T	VN Rev 49526 from /trunk-1.100	Interface		
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Radiotap Header v0, Length 20 Header revision: 0 Header pad: 0 Header length: 20 Present flags Flags: 0x10 Data Rate: 1.0 Mb/s Channel frequency: 2412 [BG 1] Channel type: 802.11b (0x00a0) SSI Signal: -48 dBm SSI Noise: -100 dBm Signal Ouality: 100	Use the field • Channel #,	ls to add columns for: TX Speed, SNR		

Frame Types Overview

The Management Frames:

- Beacon
- Probe Request & Response
- Authentication & Deauthentication
- Association & Disassociation
- Reassociation Request & Response
- Action

The Control Frames:

- Request to Send (RTS)
- Clear to Send (CTS)
- Acknowledge / Block Acknowledge Request / Block Acknowledge
- Power Save Poll

The Data Frames:

- Data
- Null Function

Frame Type: Beacon

*AirPcap US8 wireless capture adapter m. 00 [Wireshark 1.10.0m2 (SVN R	as 49526 from /trunk 1.10)				
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802.11 Channel: 2412 (8G 1) + Channel Offset: 0 - FCS Filter: Valid Fram	es 💌 None 💌	Wireless Settings	Decryption	Keys_	1
Source Destination Protocol	info hour		01.		1
Apple_6b:5e:fb Broadcast 802.11	Beacon frame,	SN=1873,	FN=0,	Flags=C,	BI=100.
Apple_6b:5e:fb Broadcast 802.11	Beacon frame,	SN=1874,	FN=0.	Flags=C,	BI=100
Apple_6b:5e:fb Broadcast 802.11	Beacon frame,	SN=1875,	FN=0,	Flags=C,	BI=100
Annla Chilarth Broadcast 202 11	Pascan frame	EN-1976	EN-O	Flance C	87-100
Frame 1: 238 bytes on wire (1904 bit	s), 238 bytes	captured	(1904	bits)	1
* Radiotap Header v0, Length 20					1
IEEE 802.11 Beacon frame, Flags:	c				1
IEEE 802.11 wireless LAN management	frame				3
Fixed parameters (12 bytes)					
Tagged parameters (178 bytes)					1
Tag: SSID parameter set: LNS WLAN					1
Tag: Supported Rates 1(B), 2(B), 1	5.5(B), 11(B).	6. 9. 12	. 18.	[Mbit/sec]	1
Tag: DS Parameter set: Current Ch	annel: 1				2
Tag: Traffic Indication Map (TIM)	DTIM 1 of 0	bitmap			1
Tag: Country Information: Country	Code CH. Envi	ronment A	nv		1
Tag: ERP Information	a case (sea a case of a case of a				5
Tag: Extended Supported Rates 24.	36, 48, 54, 1	Mbit/sec]			4
Tag: RSN Information					1
Tag: HT Capabilities (802.11n D1.)	10)				
Tag: HT Information (802,11n p1,10	0)				
Tag: RM Enabled Capabilities (5 or	tets)				1
" Tag: Vendor Specific: Microsof: W	MM/WME: Parame	ter Fleme	nt		
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Frame Types: Probe Request / Probe Response



Frame Types: Authentication Request / Authentication Response

*AirPcap USB wireless capture adapte	r nr. 00 (Wireshark 1.10.0rc2 (SVN Rev 4	9526 from /bunk-1.10)
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Filter		Expression Clear Apply Save
802.11 Channel: 2412 (BG 1) Channel	el Offset: 0 - FCS Filter: Valid Frames	Wireshark Wireless Settings Decryption Keys
Source	Destination	Protocol Info
Apple_af:36:f6	Apple_6b:5e:fb	802.11 Authentication, SN=10, FN=0, Flags=.
	Apple_af:36:f6 (F	RA) 802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C
Apple_6b:5e:fb	Apple_af:36:f6	802.11 Authentication, SN=3369, FN=0, Flags
	Apple_6b:5e:fb (F	RA) 802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C
*	1	
 IEEE 802.11 Address IEEE 802.11 wirele Fixed parameters Authentication 3 Status code: Suc Tagged parameters Tag: Vendor Spectral Tag Number: Vendor Spectral 	ss LAN management fra (6 bytes) Algorithm: Open Syste SEQ: 0x0001 ccessful (0x0000) s (11 bytes) cific: Broadcom	ame em (0)

Frame Types: Association Request / Association Response

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Filter	Eipres	sion. Clear Apply Save
802.11 Channet 2412 (8G 1) - Chann	el Offseti 0 + FCS Filters Valid Frames	Wireshark 💌 Wireless Settings Decryption Keys
Source	Destination	Pretocol Info
Apple_af:36:f6	Apple_6b:5e:fb	802.11 Association Request, SN=11, FN=0, Flag
	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA)	802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C
Apple_6b:5e:fb	Apple_af:36:f6	802.11 Association Response, SN=3370, FN=0, F
	Apple_6b:5e:fb (RA)	802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C
 IEEE 802.11 Associ IEEE 802.11 wirele Fixed parameters 	ation Request, Flags: ss LAN management frame (4 bytes)	c

Frame Types: EAPOL Key Messages

AirPcap USB wireless capture adapter nr. 00 (Wireshark 1.10.0x2 (SVN Rev 49526 from Arunk-1.10))									
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Fiter		Expression_, Clear Apply Save							
802.11 Channel 2412 (861) - Cl	hannel Offset: 0 - FCS Filter: Valid Frames	Wireshark Wireless Settings Decryption Keys							
Source	Destination	Protocol Info							
Apple_6b:5e:fb	Apple_af:36:f6	EAPOL Key (Message 1 of 4)							
and the second second second second	Apple_6b:5e:fb (RA)	802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C							
Apple_af:36:f6	Apple_6b:5e:fb	802.11 Action, SN=15, FN=0, Flags=C							
	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA)	802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C							
Apple_af:36:f6	Apple_6b:5e:fb	EAPOL Key (Message 2 of 4)							
	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA)	802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C							
 IEEE 802.11 Data Logical-Link Cor 802.1X Authentic Version: 802.12 Type: Key (3) Length: 95 Key Descriptor Key Information Key Length: 16 Replay Counter WPA Key Nonce: Key IV: 000000 WPA Key RSC: 00 WPA Key MIC: 00 WPA Key Data Logical 	Frame 523: 155 bytes on wire (1240 bits), 155 bytes captured (1240 bits) Radiotap Header v0, Length 20 IEEE 802.11 Data, Flags:F.C Logical-Link Control 802.1X Authentication Version: 802.1X-2004 (2) Type: Key (3) Length: 95 Key Descriptor Type: EAPOL RSN Key (2) © Key Information: 0x008a Key Length: 16 Replay Counter: 363 WPA Key Nonce: 2a2624820cefba9f5908a009b4ddeeb72a5baceb3541e656 Key IV: 00000000000000000000000000000000000								

Frame Type: Action

*AirPcap US8 wireless capture a	dapter nr. 00 (Wireshark 1.10.0rc2 (SVN Rev 49526 from /trunk-1.10))						
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Filten	Expression Clear Apply Save						
80211 Channel: 2412 [BG1] • C	hannel Offset: 0 - FCS Filter: Valid Frames - Wireshark - Wireless Settings Decryption Keys						
Source	Destination Protocol Info						
Apple_af:36:f6	Apple_6b:5e:fb 802.11 Action, SN=15, FN=0, Flags=						
Apple_af:36:f6	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA) 802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C Apple_6b:5e:fb EAPOL Key (Message 2 of 4)						
IEEE 802.11 Act IEEE 802.11 wire Fixed paramete Category code Action code: Dialog token	ion, Flags:C eless LAN management frame rs a: Block Ack (3) Add Block Ack Request (0x00) : 0x0e						
<pre>Block Ack Parameters: 0x1002, Block Ack Policy Block Ack Parameters: 0x1002, Block Ack Policy </pre>							
Block Ack Sta	arting Sequence Control (SSC): 0x0000 0000 = Fragment: 0 000 = Starting Sequence Number: 0						

Frame Types: Decrypted Data Frame followed by Block Acknowledge

- WEP and WPA1/2 personal mode (shared key) can be decrypted by Wireshark
- To enable WPA decryption, the key negotiation process must be captured too
- Shared Key decryptions is possible during capturing or offline from a stored file

AvPcap USB wreless capture adapter nr. 00 [Wiresherk 1.10.0rc2 (5	vitil Rev 49526 from /trunk-1.10/	
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Filter	Expression Ocer Apply Save	
802.11 Channet: 2412 [BG 1] Channel Offset: +1 + FCS Filter: Valid	d Frames Wireshark Vintless Settings	Decryption Keys
TX Speed SNR Source	Destination	Protocol Info
1] 52 dB 0.0.0.0	255.255.255.255	DHCP DHCP Request - Transactio
<pre>1] 24.0 57 dB Apple_6b:Se:fb (TA) 1] 1.0 56 dB Apple_af:36:f6 1] 1.0 45 dB</pre>	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA) Apple_6b:5e:fb Apple_af:36:f6 (RA)	802.11 802.11 Block Ack, Flags= 802.11 Null function (No data), S 802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=
	"	
 Frame 682: 408 bytes on wire (3264 Radiotap Header v0, Length 26 IEEE 802.11 QoS Data, Flags: .p Logical-Link Control Internet Protocol Version 4, Src: User Datagram Protocol, Src Port: Bootstrap Protocol 	bits), 408 bytes captured TC 0.0.0.0 (0.0.0.0), Dst: 25 bootpc (68), Dst Port: boo	(3264 bits) 5.255.255.255 (255.255.255.255) tps (67)

Frame Types: Null Function Data followed by Acknowledge

- The Null Function frame is often used as keep-alive message from the client
- Another purpose is to inform the AP if the client is changing the power save status

*AirPcap USB wireless cepture adapte	FIN OF (Wreakers 1.10 Occ.) (WH Rev 49528 from	- (frante 110)
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802.11 Channel 2412 (BG 1) + Channel	e Offset +1 + FCS Fitten Valid Frames	Weshark • Wireless Settings Decryption Keys
Source	Destination	Protecul Infe
Apple_af:36:f6	Apple_6b:Se:fb	802.11 Null function (No data), SN=30, Fh=0, Flags=FTC
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA)	802.11 Acknowledgement, Flags=C
Apple 6b:5e:fb	Broadcast	802.11 Beacon frame. SN=2519. FN=0. Flags=C. BI=100.
	re Fragments: This is the try: Frame is not being of R MGT: STA will go to sle re Data: No data buffered otected flag: Data is not der flag: Not strictly or 10 = Duration: 314 micros Apple_6b:5e:fb (e4:ce:8f 5e:fb (e4:ce:8f:6b:5e:fb) ss: Apple_af:36:f6 (40:b3:95:c ss: Apple_6b:5e:fb (e4:ce) ss: Apple_6b:fb (e4:ce) ss: Apple_6b:f	a last fragment retransmitted eep t protected rdered seconds f:6b:5e:fb)) 3:95:af:36:f6) af:36:f6) e:8f:6b:5e:fb)

Frame Types: Request-to-send (RTS) and Clear-to-send (CTS)

- RTS /CTS are used to reserve airtime in hidden node situations or busy networks
- Another purpose is to hinder old clients from interfering with clients of new standards

WLAN Client Joining AP with WPA2 Personal	pcaping (Wineshark 1.10.0m2 (SVN Rev 49526	from /trunk-1.1	0))
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Filter	Expression.	Clear Apply	Since.
802.11 Channel: 2412 (BG 1) Channel Offset	+1 • FCS Filten Valid Frames • Wire	shark 💌 Wi	eless Settings Decryption Keys
Source	Destination	Protocol	Info
Apple_af:36:f6 (TA)	Apple_6b:5e:fb (RA)	802.11	Request-to-send, Flags=C
	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA)	802.11	Clear-to-send, Flags=C
192.168.0.203	2.16.205.15	TCP	49152 > http [SYN] Seq=280961708 V
Apple_6b:5e:fb (TA) Apple_6b:5e:fb	Apple_af:36:f6 (RA) Broadcast	802.11 802.11	802.11 Block Ack, Flags=Cr Beacon frame, SN=2542, FN=0, Flags
Frame 835: 46 bytes on	wire (368 bits), 46 by	tes cap	tured (368 bits)
 Radiotap Header v0, Le IEEE 802.11 Request-to Type/Subtype: Request Frame Control Field: .000 0000 0101 0000 a 	ngth 26 -send, Flags: t-to-send (0x1b) 0xb400 = Duration: 80 microsec	onds	
Receiver address: App Transmitter address: Frame check sequence	Dle_6b:5e:fb (e4:ce:8f: Apple_af:36:f6 (40:b3: : 0x38822ca4 [correct]	6b:5e:fb 95:af:36) 5:f6)

Frame Types: Data and Acknowledges

- In the air, every Data frame is acknowledged or otherwise retransmitted
- 802.11 a/b/g every single Data frame is acknowledged. 802.11n introduced Block Acks
- Single Acks must follow immediately after a Data frame and have no source address

WLAN Data_01.pcap [Wires	hark 1.10.0rc2 (SVN Rev 49526 from /hrunk-1.1	on	
Ede Edit View Go Captu	re Analyze Statistics Telephony Tools	Internals Help	
00412	🖹 X 🕄 🔍 🕈 🔶 🐺 🛓 🛙		Q.Q. 🔟 📓 🕅 🥦 🛸 🔛
Filter		Expression	Clear Apply Save
802.11 Channel: 2412 [86.1]	Channel Offset: +1 FCS Filter: Valid Fram	nes 💌 Wires	hark 💌 Wireless Settings Decryption Keys
Source	Destination	Protocol	Info .
192.168.0.202	85.119.154.59	HTTP	GET /WIRESHARK.swf HTTP/1.1
	Philips_45:7f:2f (RA)	802.11	Acknowledgement, Flags=C
85.119.154.59	192.168.0.202	HTTP	HTTP/1.1 304 Not Modified
	Cisco_11:1f:60 (RA)	802.11	Acknowledgement, Flags=C
192.168.0.202	85.119.154.59	TCP	gadmifoper > http [ACK] Seg=3679137527
	Philips 45:7f:2f (RA)	802.11	Acknowledgement, Flags=C
192,168,0,202	192,168,0,255	NBNS	Registration NB WORKGROUP<00>
	Philips 45:7f:2f (RA)	802.11	Acknowledgement, Flags=C
*			
 Frame 120: 474 Radiotap Heade IEEE 802.11 Da Logical-Link C 	bytes on wire (3792 bi r v0, Length 24 ta, Flags:TC	ts), 474	bytes captured (3792 bits)
Totornat Brate	col Version 4 Sect 102	168 0 2	02 (102 168 0 202) Det. 85 110 154 50
Internet Proto	COT Version 4, STC: 192	.100.0.2	(2461) Det Dett (2461)
· Iransmission C	ontrol protocol, Src Po	ort: qadm	Troper (2461), UST Port: http (80), Seq
Hypertext Tran	ster Protocol	Andre andress	والمالية المحصية المحصية المستحين والمستحين والمستحية والمستحية المحصية المحتج والمستحية

Filter on Retransmitted frames

- Retransmitted frames are marked with the Retry Bit by the sender
- Create a Display Filter on retransmitted frames and save it as a Quick Filter Button
- Watch the percentage of retransmitted versus original frames in the bottom line

WLAN Data OL post (Wash	ark 1.50,0102 (SVN Rev 49526 from	ftrunk-1.100					
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0.8 4 8 4 8 1	TR S C + + +	7 4 🗍 B	aaa		¥ 1		-
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802.11 Channel 2412 (96.1)	Channel Offset: +1 + FCS Filter	Valid Frames	Wiresherk	Wireless Settings	Decryption Keys		1
Source	Destination	Protocol	Info				
192.168.0.202	85.119.154.59	TCP	qadmi fo	per > http	[RST, AC	<] Seq≈367913752	7 Ack=1372112411
192.168.0.202	85.119.154.59	TCP	qadmifo	per > http	[RST, AC	<] Seq=367913752	7 Ack=1372112411
*				in '			
IEEE 802.11 Dat	ta, Flags:R.	TC					
Type/Subtype:	Data (0x20)	100					1
Frame Control	Field: 0x0809						
00 =	Version: 0						
10 =	Type: Data frame	(2)					
= 0000	Subtype: 0						1
= Flags: 0x09	1.000						- 5
	= DS status: Fram	e from STA	to DS vi	a an AP (TO DS: 1 F	rom DS: 0) (0x0)	1)
0	= More Fragments:	This is th	ne last f	ragment			
· 1	= Retry: Frame is	being retr	ansmitte	d			
- man and marine	= PWR MGT: STA WI	ll stay up	-	and a second second	and the second second		Lane manne

والمراجعة والمحمود والصحي والمحصور والمرادي المتصحين والمتحا المتحصون والمعصورة والمحص والمعادي والمح	والمحادثة والمنافقة والمنافقة والمحادثة والمحافظ والمحافظة والمحا	and a property	بالمستويلين فارتبعها والمدوان والمتعارين والمواسي فليستنه
🔘 💅 File: "G:\1_Wireshark\4 Trace Files & Profiles\Trace Files WL	Packets: 386 · Displayed: 14 (3.6%)	Load time: 0:00.046	Profile: LNS WLAN RadioTap

Where to capture WLAN frames

• The physical location within a radio cell is relevant for your capturing results

Rules of thumb

For analyzing problems in a single cell:

- Stay near the Access Point
- All traffic flows through the AP
- Clients must not hear each other

For analyzing roaming problems:

- Stay near the roaming client
- Capture with multiple AirPcaps
- Use Beacons to define your location



Graphical presentation of Radio Signal Strength with Wireshark IO Graphs

• Using the field radiotap.db_antsignal from two AirPcap NX tuned in two channels



Graph 2 Color Filter: wlan.sa == 00:1b:2b:a9:3b:c0 Graph 4 Color Filter: wlan.sa == 00:1b:2b:a9:3c:60 Graph 5 Color Filter: wlan.sa == 00:15:70:fb:c4:57

- → Access Point in Channel A40
- → Access Point in Channel A36
- → Mobile Client followed with Wireshark



Overview of WLAN standards

Mbps	Coding	Modulation	Description			
1 2	Barker Barker	DBPSK	802.11 DSSS (Clause 15) with ,Long Preamble'			
5.5 11	ССК ССК	DQPSK	802.11b HR/DSSS (Clause with ,Short Pream	18) ble'		
6, 9 12, 18 24, 36 48, 54	OFDM OFDM OFDM OFDM	BPSK QPSK 16-QAM 64-QAM	802.11g Extended Rate PHY (ERP)			802.11a
7.2-72.2 14.4-144.4	OFDM OFDM	MCS 0-7 MCS 8-15	1 Stream 2 Streams	802.11n High Troughput (HT) Extensions		

2.4 GHz

CCK = Complementary Code Keying DBPSK = Differential Binary Phase-Shift Keying DQPSK = Differential Quadrature Phase-Shift Keying OFDM = Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing 5 GHz

BPSK = Binary Phase-Shift KeyingQPSK = Quadrature Phase-Shift KeyingQAM = Quadrature Amplitude Modul.MCS = Modulation Coding Scheme

Outlook to WLAN products and standards

- 802.11n products using 4 streams will go up to 600 Mbps (PHY data rate)
- 802.11n products using **Beamforming** to focus RF energy and improve radio signal
- 802.11z Direct Link Setup to allow direct client to client communication
- 802.11w Management Frame Protection to increase security level against intruders
- 802.11ac 5G WiFi is an improvement to 802.11n. Uses 5GHz band and defines up to a maximum of 6.93 Gbps with up to 8 streams and up to 8 bonded channels (160 MHz)



802.11ac 5G WiFi logo



802.11ad WiGig logo

• 802.11ad WiGig for short range WLANs using 60GHz band with up to 7Gbps

Thank you for your attention



Rolf Leutert, Leutert NetServices, <u>www.wireshark.ch</u>

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