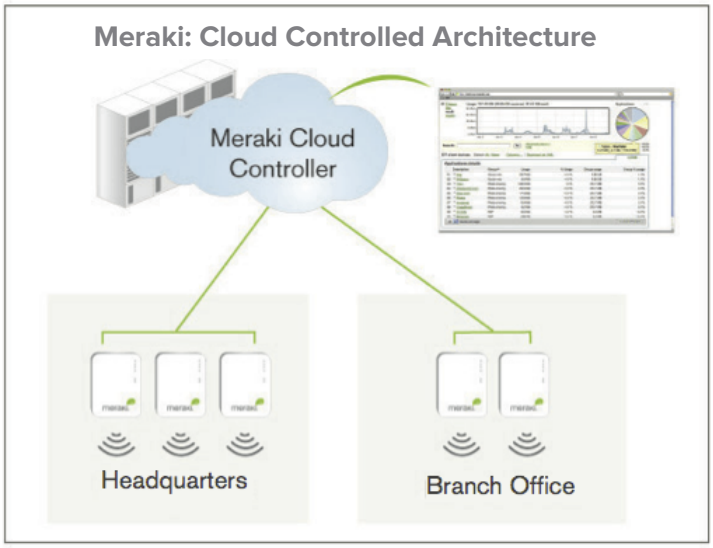
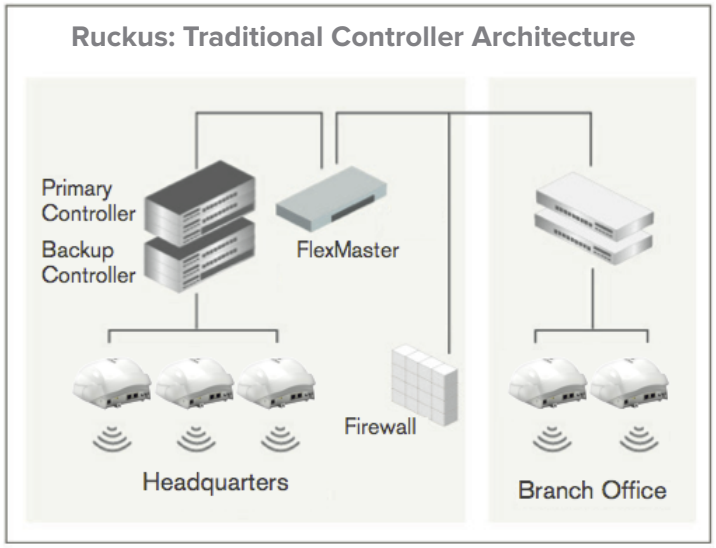
Meraki vs. Ruckus: The Reality Check





Key Questions to Ask:

- Do you want to buy and manage multiple hardware controllers?
- Do you need to block traffic that doesn't use fixed ports, such as BitTorrent?
- Do you need to prioritize real-time applications like Skype and video?
- If a client is infected with a virus, will your network be protected?
- Would you prefer a solution using APs that deploy with zero config?
- Would you prefer a solution that is proven in top universities (Stanford, MIT), retail (United Colors of Benetton UK), and several multi-thousand AP deployments?

Key Differences Between Meraki and Ruckus

Meraki APs are managed securely over the web via Meraki's Enterprise Cloud Controller

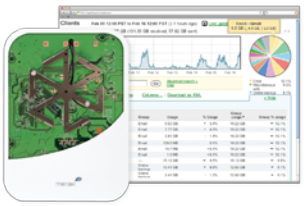
- Centralized, network-wide management via cloud-based controller (no on-site controller hardware)
- Geographically redundant, highly available Cloud Controller
- Scalability to networks of all sizes - just add more APs and they are provisioned by the Cloud Controller automatically
- Deploys in minutes without manual provisioning, regardless of location - APs discover Cloud Controller automatically

Ruckus APs are managed through on-site controllers and overlay appliances

- Management via ZoneDirector hardware controller and FlexMaster overlay software
- Backup controller hardware needed for high availability
- Scaling networks can require upgrading controllers and licenses, and purchasing/managing FlexMaster on a server
- Each AP must be provisioned on the same subnet as the controller or by using custom DHCP server configurations

Under the Hood: Technical Details

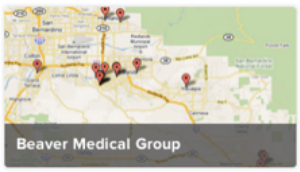
Lots of technical jargon may sound interesting at first, but make sure to check its real-world benefits.

	Meraki	Ruckus
Security	Meraki's built-in stateful policy firewall lets you set user and group-based controls on resources and easily integrates into existing VLAN scenarios.	Ruckus does not have a built-in firewall and must be matched with complex firewall/VLAN rules to securely integrate into wired networks.
Network Traffic	Meraki lets you see the applications that are used on your network, and use traffic shaping to control bandwidth by application. You can prevent recreational traffic from affecting critical applications.	Ruckus doesn't have the insight into the network to differentiate between recreational and productive wireless traffic, and can't throttle undesired applications or prioritize critical ones.
Great Access	Meraki's Virtual Network Isolation provides encrypted, secure access to guests in isolated subnets. Guests can't even see each other's traffic, and aren't exposed to spyware apps like Firesheep. Secure guest access, isolated from the LAN, is enabled via a single click.	Dynamic PSK turns a simple concept, PSK, into a complex process. Each client must get the credentials on the LAN or via a separate, dedicated SSID. The credentials are then pushed through an applet to the client. Only then can the client join the WLAN.
Range and Density	Meraki's Auto RF ensures that each AP has optimal RF settings based on density, clients, power, interference, and location. This maximizes throughput for the whole network, not just for one AP or client.	Ruckus' high AP output power can give it some additional range, but this approach is misguided in dense client environments, where multiple APs will try to shout over one another.
Beamforming	Meraki APs have built-in chipset-based beamforming. This allows all clients to enjoy the benefits of beamforming while the AP can maintain a low profile and sleek design.	Ruckus' antenna-based beamforming tests well in single-client scenarios, but the benefits quickly evaporate in dense environments, which is why the rest of the industry does not use this technique.
Fairness and Balancing	Meraki's traffic shaping lets control bandwidth by application instead of blindly allocating airtime to all users equally, regardless of their use. Band steering assigns clients to the correct frequency band.	Airtime fairness and balancing shares resources equally between clients, but without regard to application, thus permitting low-priority applications to consume available airtime.
Firmware	Firmware upgrades are delivered seamlessly by the Cloud Controller (user-scheduled), removing the burden on administrators.	Controller databases must be manually backed up using command line MySQL instructions. APs must be manually assigned with new firmware and then schedule for an upgrade.
Viruses	Built-in network access control (NAC) protects your network by requiring clients to run anti-virus software. Protection is applied right at the edge by the AP.	The Ruckus wireless network is defenseless against viruses and worms, leaving open a security hole into your network.
Support	Live phone and email technical support is included at no extra charge for all Enterprise customers.	Phone support is separately available for controllers and APs, and for APs is charged on a per-AP basis.
WLAN Product Line	 Meraki Cloud Controller, high performance indoor and rugged outdoor 802.11n access points up to 900 Mbps.	 Ruckus controller, high performance indoor and rugged outdoor 802.11n access points up to 600 Mbps.

Meraki: Thousands of Satisfied Customers

Any vendor can talk, so it's important to check the real experience of customers. Meraki has been deployed in over 18,000 networks worldwide. Be sure to ask: where has Ruckus been successfully deployed?

Below are a few of the thousands of satisfied Meraki customers. Learn more at **meraki.com/customers.**



"Meraki provided a future-proof solution that passed our rigorous requirements while providing superior value."

Marshall Veerkamp, Senior VP and CIO, EPIC Management, L.P.

"Meraki has the feature set, and they have a system that's really intuitive and easy to manage. It's a great experience for both wireless users and IT administrators."

Jack Costanza Assistant Director, CSAIL

"What I like about Meraki is the ease of configuration and distribution. I think the dashboard is fantastic, including its analytics and its use of Google maps."

Mark Bishop, IT Manager, Benetton UK

"People told us that the WiFi network was one of the best they'd seen."

Loic LeMeur, LeWeb Organizer

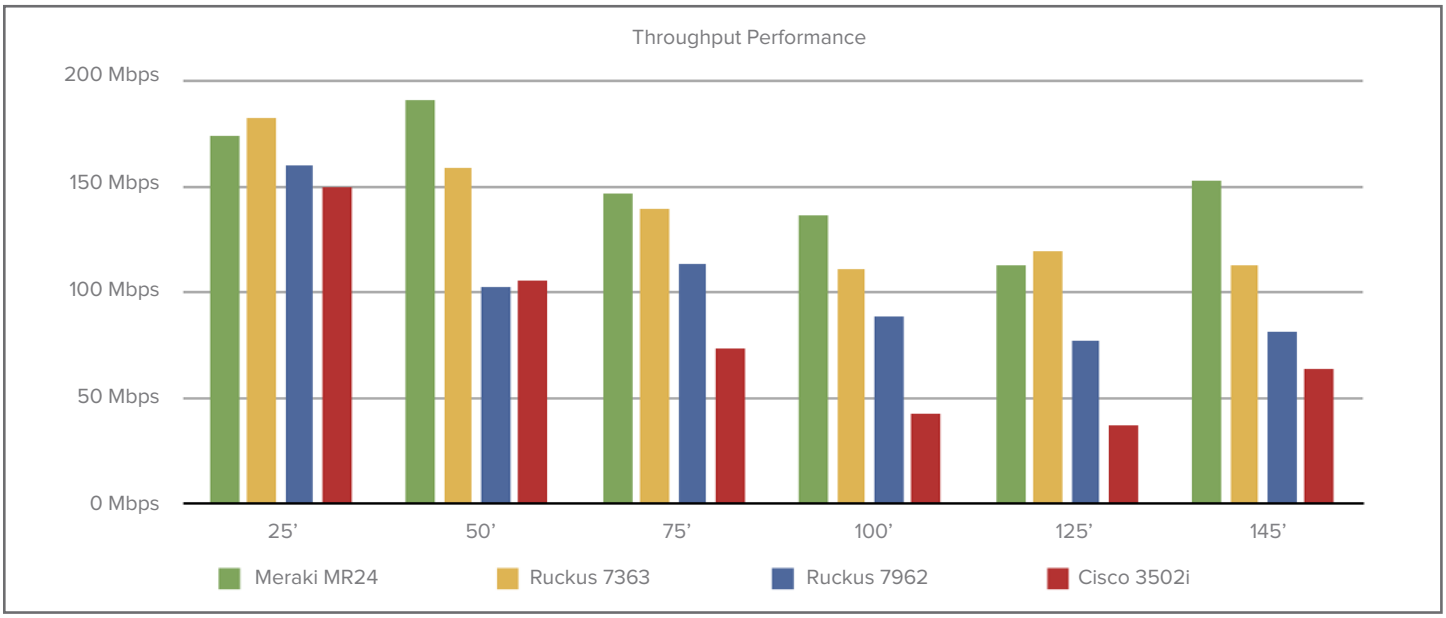
Consider RF Excellence and Management

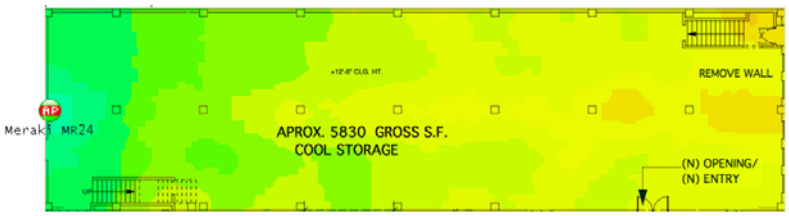
Enterprise Feature	Meraki	Ruckus
WPA2-Enterprise with 802.1X authentication	✓	✓
VLAN tagging	✓	✓
QoS for voice, video	✓	✓
Rogue AP detection and location	✓	✓
Automatic RF optimization	✓	✓
Layer 7 application traffic shaping	✓	
3-stream, 900 Mbit/s access points	✓	
Stateful policy firewall	✓	
Integrated client location tracking	✓	
Built-in multi-site management	✓	
Spectrum analysis	✓	
Teleworker VPN	✓	
Built-in network access control (NAC)	✓	
Zero-configuration virtual branch networks	✓	

With the foundation of a fast, reliable RF environment, mission-critical applications and services quickly move from wired to wireless networks. Without effective management tools, security, performance, reliability, and cost are quickly compromised.

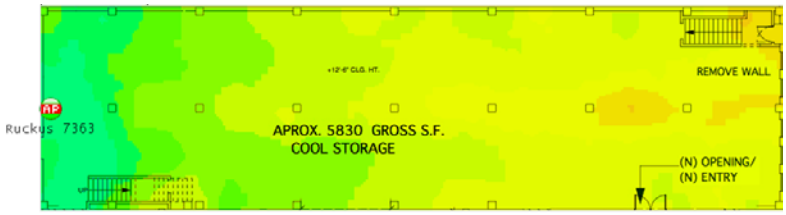
See the Truth About WiFi Performance

Meraki set out to find the truth about RF performance, in particular signal strength and throughput. We tested Meraki's MR24, Ruckus' 7363 and 7962, and Cisco's 3502i in a clean and controlled RF environment, free from external interference. We found the Meraki MR24 to outperform all the APs we tested.





Meraki MR24 delivers large coverage area with strong signal strength



Ruckus 7363 delivers large coverage area of strong signal strength

- The Meraki MR24's average throughput was 11% higher than the Ruckus 7363, and had the highest throughput in 4 of 6 tests.
- The heatmaps show that Meraki's MR24 outperforms the Ruckus 7363, 7962, and Cisco 3502i in signal strength and coverage, providing excellent signal strength and overall better coverage.

Ruckus 7962 delivers smaller coverage area of strong signal strength

Case Study: The First Campus-Wide 3-Stream Network

Renton School District in Washington State deployed the first district-scale 3-stream 802.11n WiFi network. Renton chose Meraki's 3-stream MR24 cloud controlled wireless access points to provide enterprise-class WiFi to Renton's 16,000 students, faculty and staff. The deployment covers 28 sites, including elementary, middle and high schools, the district office, facilities, and the football stadium.

During their evaluation, Renton evaluated multiple vendors and performed a side by side bake-off between Meraki and Ruckus. Renton appreciated Meraki's differentiated features, including application traffic shaping, built-in NAC, and cloud- based centralized management. In a rigorous RF bake-off between Meraki and Ruckus, Renton tested performance by simultaneously streaming video on 30 PC's and 4 iPads. Renton also tested range, wall throughput, distance and interference. Renton selected Meraki, after the Meraki MR24 beat Ruckus across the board.

1 **Contact Meraki for a free trial**

Contact Us

2 **Online demo at: meraki.com/tools**

Start Demo

Performance to See for Yourself

You're probably tired of vendors talking about themselves and each other. How do you separate the wheat from the chaff? The answer: try Meraki for yourself.

With Meraki's free trial program, you can get hardware in your hands at no cost and with no commitment. You'll be up and running in about 15 minutes, without training or headaches. Sign up online, or just give us a call at 415-632-5847 (888-490-0918 within the US).

We'll help you get started, and perform your own tests. To get the best signal strength and throughput performance, make sure to:

- Pick an appropriate, open channel
- Mount the AP vertically on a wall to reflect a real-world installation
- Use a high-performance 2x2 or 3x3 client
- Record results using an industry-standard measurement tool such as iPerf or Ixia IxChariot for repeatable, traceable results

Have any questions? Give us a call and we'll walk you through it.