

Review: Oplink TripleShield Proves Powerful, Affordable, Potentially Creepy

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The fact that I was able to freak out my wife with the Oplink TripleShield is a testament to just how far consumer wireless technologies have come. A complete home security system in a box, TripleShield takes about 15 minutes to set up and I found that it pretty much does what it says it will do. While breaching the system's door and window sensors or setting of the included motion sensor won't trigger a response from law enforcement or even a private security company, it will give users peace of mind, as well as time to dial 911. The system can also be set up to send alerts to pre-programmed contacts in the event a breach occurs. That said, there's more than meets the eye here.



Set Up

The TripleShield system runs off a main hub that attaches to your home wireless router. The hub runs everything through the Oplink Cloud, which the included documents say “constantly communicates with each component of your system, so when you add new components in your home, such as additional Oplink sensors or cameras, they are automatically recognized and configured as soon as you plug them in.” The Oplink Cloud will also deliver software updates that keep the system updated.

Set up really was easy. Each sensor includes two small plastic pieces. One part attaches to the door itself, while the other part attaches to the frame. They need to be almost touching to create a magnetic bond and given that the trim on our front

door was raised away from the door itself, the connection couldn't be made and thus also couldn't be broken. If I had been installing the system permanently in my house, I could have made it work, but I needed to return the system, so I had to forego securing the front door. The back door of our house is flush with the frame and installing that sensor was easy and set off the alarm when the system was breached after being armed.

Likewise, pairing the cameras with the hub and activating them was easy and they worked perfectly. Everything is controlled via an app, which can be downloaded from the App Store. Streaming views from the cameras, which includes night vision, were immediately available within the app. You can also check the status of door and window sensors or add additional devices from within the app. The sensors are all powered by batteries that are included in the kit, and the cameras, as well as the motion sensor and siren, can be plugged into a wall outlet.

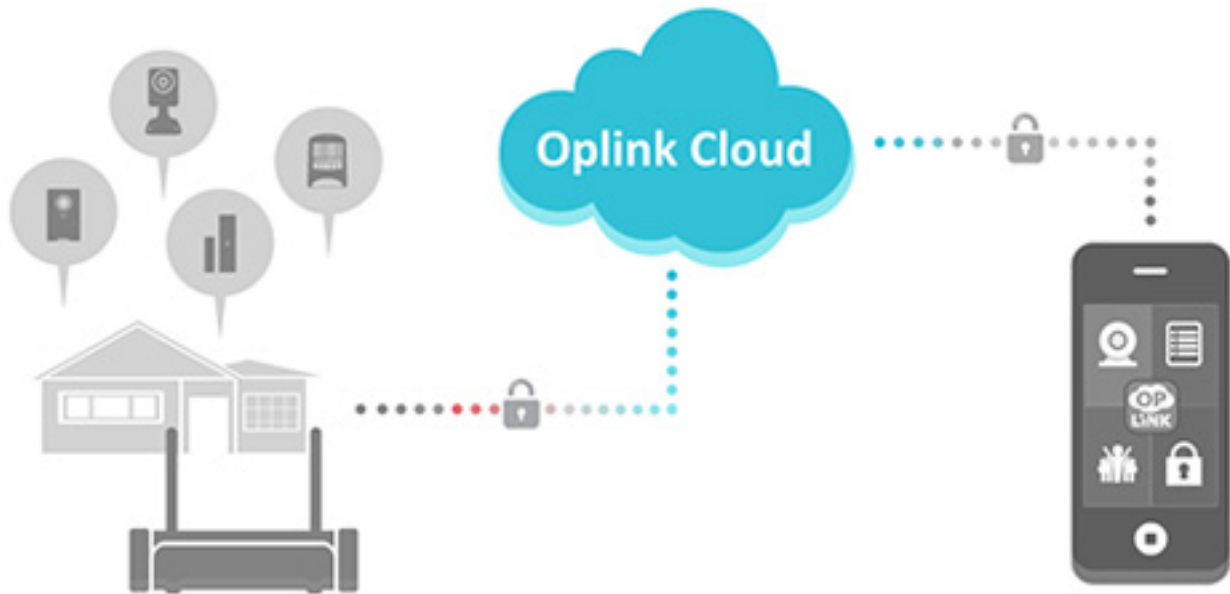
Also included is a 16GB USB thumb drive, which gives users additional storage space for videos.

As I said, everything worked seamlessly once I had it set up. On scale of 1-10 for difficulty, with 10 being the most difficult, I'd give TripleShield a 3. In other words, with a little worry and minimal sweat, my mom and dad could probably get this kind of thing up and running.

Many use cases

Oplink's solution highlights remote viewing as an affordable reality. The entire TripleShield kit currently costs \$349 online (with an additional \$19.99 per month), and will be available in retail outlets soon for \$299. Additional cameras can be added for \$129 and sensors for \$29.99. The app is free to download on your smartphone. The \$19.99 per month service fee gets you functionality like the ability to stream and record live video; record video based on alerts; and share recorded videos via a service called VideoGram with friends, family or authorities.

The use cases for this kind of thing are endless. The most obvious is being made aware when an intruder is in your house. The cameras are enabled with motion-sensing ability and when activated by an intruder the system can send an alert to your smartphone, while also setting off the siren alarm in the house. Again, this won't send the cops to your door, but it would certainly give you adequate time to call and report a break-in, whether you're in or away from the house.



But aside from the usual security use cases, being able to see what's going on around your house might also give parents a way to check in on the babysitter. You might also like to check in on a pet that's home alone. While testing the system, I was travelling in Tokyo and was able to connect to the hotel Wi-Fi and see what was happening back at home.

The door and window sensors also offer a different kind of picture of your home and could be used to alert you at work when the kids arrive home from school. In fact, I felt like there was a value in not being connected to a dedicated security firm, as it lends the user some flexibility as to how they choose to use the system.

The other side of the coin

I mentioned that I was travelling while testing the system and it allowed me to check on what was happening back at the house. While I liked the ability to see my kids having breakfast, my wife wasn't so crazy about the idea of constant home surveillance. She ended up unplugging the cameras. She said even though she knew it was me on the other end, it still gave her the creeps. And there lies the delicate balance between security and privacy in the modern world. While it's cheap and feasible to have 24/7 surveillance of every aspect of lives, do we really want to? Sure, we might be more secure, but I have to admit there are some very real ethical issues that our society needs to discuss when it comes to these kinds of technologies.

As this is a product review, I need to emphasize that TripleShield does exactly what it advertises. As such, it's also worth noting that those interested in purchasing such a system might also have a conversation with their significant other about whether home monitoring is right for them. It would be a bummer to have installed

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Published on Wireless Week (<http://www.wirelessweek.com>)

everything and then have someone in the family, or the whole family, decide it just plain creeps them out.

At \$349 for the initial TripleShield kit we tested, I can highly recommend this as a good option for home surveillance. It's easy to set up and add more components as you need them. The \$19.99 per-month service charge seems a bit steep given comparable pricing on some of the carrier-branded services (i.e. AT&T's Digital Life) which may offer a different level of customer service, as well as deeper integration with your existing home broadband and cellular services. It's at least worth shopping around to ensure that this is the right solution for your needs.

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