Thank You - de KK6FUT

Written by Ben KK6FUT - Last Updated Monday, 25 April 2016 21:57

(ed: recent e-mail in the true Ham spirit, rx'd 25APR2016)

Jim,

I see you are one of the folks who put together Broadband-Hamnet. I just wanted to thank you for two things: 1 - for helping to create the project in the first place, and 2 – for keeping the Linksys WRT54G code up and running (and compatible).

I just discovered Ham mesh networking a few days ago, and (despite all the whining and pain with the WRT54G) – supporting that platform was INSTRUMENTAL in getting me to experiment with mesh. Yes, the Ubiquiti stuff is far better suited for a lot of things, but the fact I could buy two Craigslist WRT54G's (for pocket change—less than lunch out here) and be up in an afternoon and running was **absolutely key** to allowing me to try this out. I would never, ever go out and buy two Ubiquiti's of any flavor just to "try out this mesh thing" – whereas, those $5/$10 WRT54G's are just the ticket.
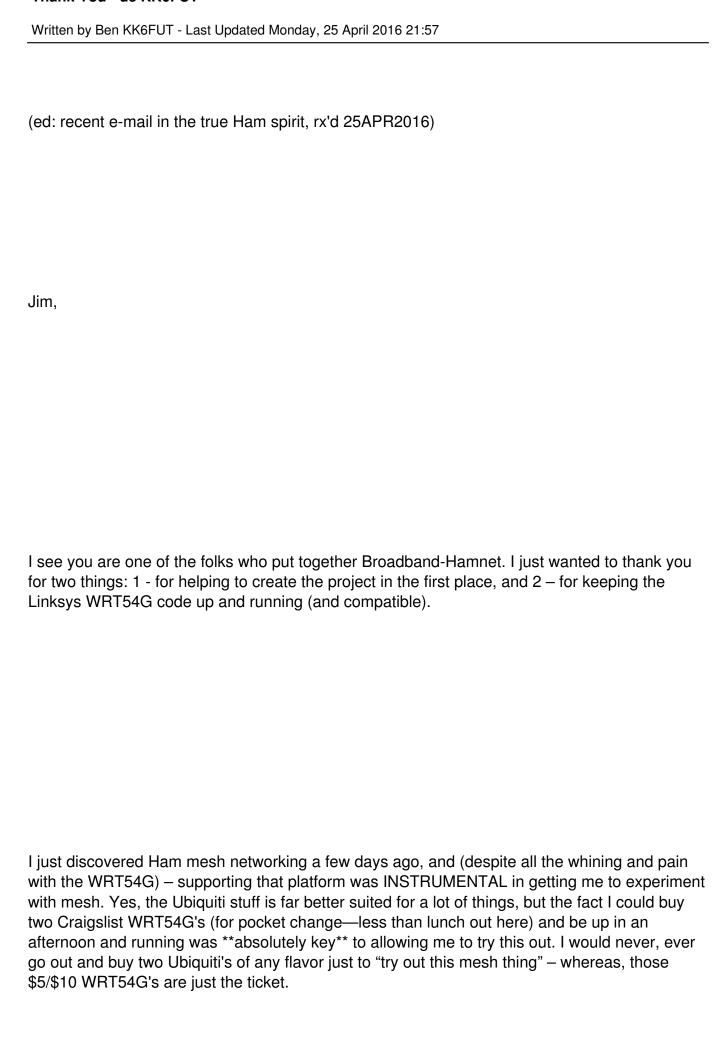
So, having been a software developer (firmware and networking code, to boot) I understand the pain of supporting old legacy platforms, but I'd like to let you and your fellow team members – PLEASE keep that code base alive!!! Even if you can just maintain a "compatibility mode" when connecting to the WRT54G's in your future code base, it's REALLY REALLY IMPORTANT. It would be even better (particularly from the reliability side) if you can make things backward compatible as you build new/great features into your software, even as difficult and painful as it is.

For $100, I can put together a dozen or more nodes for a mini-mesh for a lot of different things – field day logging – distributed operations center – independent off-grid, computer network – solar powered mini-mesh – I can think of a lot of things – which you can't do with the Ubiquiti (POE + battery = $$$$, plus it's 24V not 12V). Plus I can also wire in Raspberry Pi mini nodes for fun, put sensors out in the garden or on the hill, etc. For the same money, I can get one Ubiquiti node. Maybe. And connect to no one (working on it... but nearest Line-of-Sight Ubiquiti node for me (AREDN) is 20 miles away on top of a mountain top. Great for the old repeater/infra$tructure model – but no good for just playing with the technology. Plus, I get to build enclosures for the WRT54G, experiment building my own 2.4ghz antennas (1 Yagi down, next a omni collinear) – and figure out how to wire it to a battery and panel. With the Ubiquiti... Well, all done. No fun. Yeah, there are issues building a big network, with reach, noise and channel conflict, etc. with the WRT54G – but it is sure a great starter platform and a great way to get us trying this mesh thing out.

So, THANK YOU, and please keep it up (and keep us experimenters in mind).

Ben

KK6FUT