



CRNtech

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products *of the* year



NETGEAR® READYNAS® PRO

This Device Is A Worthy Contender

■ BY BRIAN SHEINBERG



Network-attached storage devices started out as relatively simple ways for an enterprise to add additional shared storage space to its network. Over the past few years, though, these appliances have been shrinking in both size and price, allowing the SMB and SOHO markets to take advantage of their features. There are even a few models that target the rising home network and media center users.

With the acquisition of Infrant Technologies last year, NETGEAR gear also obtained its rather successful ReadyNAS line. The popular ReadyNAS NV+ was a second-place finisher in our NAS Bake-Off earlier this year. Aiming to improve it, NETGEAR recently released the new six-bay, ReadyNAS Pro. The Test Center spent some time with this latest model and found it to be a worthy addition to the line.

Currently available in three Business Edition configurations—1.5TB, 3TB and 6TB, our evaluation unit was Model RNDP6350, which came loaded with three 500GB hard drives. There is also a Pioneer Edition that is diskless. All the drives are hot-swappable and, with current drive capacities reaching 1.5GB, the ReadyNAS Pro can now support up to 9TB total.

Looking like a big brother to the four-bay NV+ model, the Promeasures 10 x 6.7 x 11.2 inches and weighs in at 16.5 pounds (without hard drives). Similar to many of

today's computer cases, it has a slick, black finish, and a mesh grill on the front. Running along the top edge of the front door is an easy-to-read blue OLED display. A power switch, back-up button and USB port round out the front-panel controls. By default, pressing the button will back up the "backup" share on the NAS to an external storage device plugged into the USB port below it. Rear connections include two additional USB ports, as well as two RJ-45 Gigabit Ethernet jacks.

Via the administrator console, the network connections can be configured for Teaming and Failover, with various bonding options, including load-balancing. This allows for the combining of NICs to one IP to pool bandwidth and failover from one to the other if one should stop working.

ReadyNAS Pro supports RAID 0, 1, 5 and 6, as well as its own X-RAID2 (expandable) configuration. Built-in streaming services include Squeeze-Center, iTunes, UPnP AV and Home Media, and there is also a print queue service for a USB printer.

During our tests, setting up the device was simple. After connecting to the network and powering it on, we installed the included RAIDar software, whose wizard scanned the network for attached NAS and walked us through the initial, browser-based configuration (during testing, however, the box sent out an invalid security certificate warning that had to be cleared before being allowed to continue).

As was the case with previous ReadyNAS units, the administrator console proved itself to be intuitive. Shares are easily created or deleted and the same holds true for users and

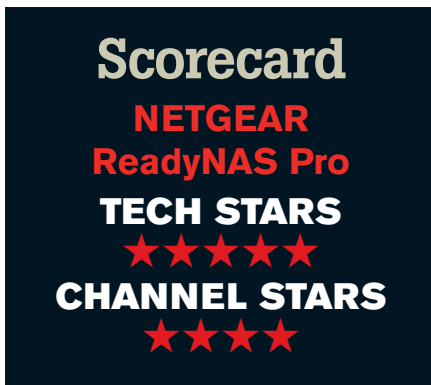
groups, who can also have quotas set against their accounts. Supported protocols are CIFS (SMB), NFS, AFP, FTP, HTTP/S and RSync and each share can be customized to individually used specific protocols. In addition, shares can be configured on USB storage devices.

To measure speed, two directories with various file types were copied from the testing PC to the NAS and back again. The first, a 1.2GB directory, contained 23 files and the second, a 3.2GB directory, had 41.

Writing to the device, the 1.2GB folder took 1 minute, 52 seconds, and the 3.2GB folder took 2 minutes, 7 seconds, while reading from it took 5 minutes, 11 seconds, and 5 minutes, 56 seconds, respectively. While the timing for the 1.2GB directory is fairly slower than many similar devices for which we've tested the results, the 3.2GB directory is greatly improved over those same devices. Based on Netgear's data, as well as some beta testers across the Web, the unit has been measured to reach more than 100MBps. We're willing to concede

that our local machine was probably a bottleneck in the testing and, depending on the setup, realistic speeds will probably fall somewhere in between.

Loaded with scores of other features, ReadyNAS Pro is many things rolled into one chassis. It is an extremely powerful, relatively small, device that can dynamically grow along with the company that uses it. With prices ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,100, it costs more than other comparable products, but its feature set and solid performance make it worthy of consideration. ■



Storage

WINNER: **NETGEAR READYNAS PRO**



There was a time when a company that sought out 6TB of storage for its data management needs either ran a major international finance operation, was involved in deep scientific research, or had billions of dollars of revenue at stake. Today, that amount of data storage is obtainable for even mom-and-pop operations—and one product scales down better than others the Test Center has seen.

Netgear ReadyNAS Pro is available in three Business Edition configurations—1.5TB, 3TB and 6TB. Our evaluation unit came loaded with three 500GB hard drives. There is also a Pioneer Edition that is diskless. All the drives are hot-swappable and, with current drive capacities reaching 1.5GB, it can support up to 9TB total.

List prices on the device, depending on configuration, range from \$2,000 to \$4,100, putting massive amounts of storage within reach of even small IT budgets. Given the reliance of even the smallest businesses on data and storage, Netgear's product can put significant value into the hands of just about any business or workgroup.

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