

# Network backup

Darren Yates tests 15 of the latest prebuilt and DIY network-attached storage devices to back up everything from movies to music.

**15 TESTED**

Having external storage for every PC in your house could easily get confusing — not only would you need multiple devices, you might also end up saving multiple copies of the same thing. Network-attached storage (NAS) units are often a better solution, as they give you a centralised storage portal for your important files. These days, the better units can manage your BitTorrent downloads, act as a printer server, dish up your multimedia files and do the job of a file server, too. Most entry-level models support one, two or four drives,

and they come with or without drives, allowing you to either take the easy option, or build your own unique storage. Not all NAS units are great value, however, so it makes sense to think about the features you need before you commit to buying. And not all offer the same speed — having Gigabit Ethernet helps, but as we found out, it's not the only thing that determines overall data transfer speed.

## QNAP TS-119

PRICE \$469 / CONTACT BLUECHIP INFOTECH / PHONE 1300 727 474 / WEB www.qnap.com

QNAP has a reputation for delivering plenty of features in its NAS devices and the TS-119 epitomises this. It's not cheap for a single-drive unit, especially since you must install your own hard drive. However, in terms of features, it does pretty much everything. Whether you're after a print server, a place to host your web site, a self-contained

BitTorrent downloader or just networked storage, it does it all. It features three USB ports, but no eSATA ports. Installation of the hard drive isn't as simple as the D-Link: you need to remove the cover, slide the drive into place and screw it into position. The TS-119 is a flyer, thanks to its fast 1.2GHz processor. All the units in this group feature Gigabit

(1,000Mbps) Ethernet, but this one wiped the floor with the others for read and write speed. Given you still have to pay for your own drive, it's a tad pricey, but if you want features and speed in a compact package, you won't beat it.

**PC User says:** *It's quick and loaded with features, but it doesn't come cheap.*

## QNAP TS-109 II

PRICE \$365 / CONTACT BLUECHIP INFOTECH / PHONE 1300 727 474 / WEB www.qnap.com

This second-generation TS-109 is another older unit that's still hanging around in stores and, like the DNS-313, it's also more expensive than it was last year. However, with the release of the TS-119, the TS-109 II doesn't quite look as good. It has all the same features as the TS-119 like FTP, web hosting capabilities,

print server and the rest, so on that score it does well; however, with its slower 500MHz onboard processor, it doesn't have the speed. It took 10 minutes to write our 5GB test data to the installed 250GB Western Digital test drive, which is close to 2.5 times longer than the TS-119. It goes to show that having Gigabit Ethernet

means nothing if the onboard processor isn't up to scratch. Still, the overall functionality saves this one from being flung on the testing scrap heap, although for an extra \$100, the TS-119 makes more sense.

**PC User says:** *Has all the features of the TS-119, but none of its speed.*



## QNAP TS-219P

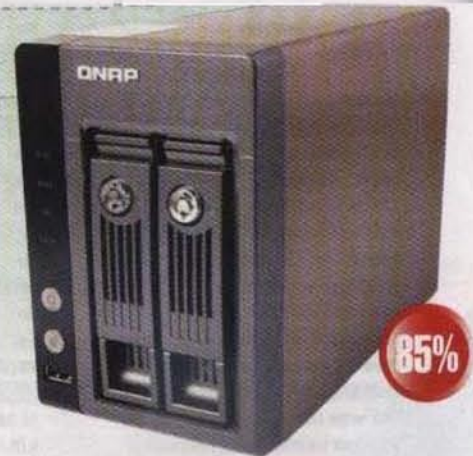
PRICE \$640 / CONTACT BLUECHIP INFOTECH / PHONE 1300 727 474 / WEB www.qnap.com

Looking at the unit itself, this was easily the most expensive model in this group, and it'll cost even more by the time you add in your hard drives. That said, the QNAP TS-219P is a seriously good piece of kit, with functionality, speed and build quality in spades. The two hot-swappable drive bays here are lockable, which should prevent any accidental removable,

especially if you're using them in RAID 0. Its speed is impressive, thanks more to its 1.2GHz Marvell processor than anything else. Writing 5GB of data in RAID 0 in under 5 minutes, and reading it back in under 4, is nothing to sneeze at. On top of that, you've also got QNAP's impressive array of extras, with everything from FTP to BitTorrent and web serving. And this thing

feels tough — its solid aluminium design doesn't feel like it's going to fall apart on you. External connectivity is excellent, with three USB 2.0 and two eSATA ports covering everything from printers to USB flash drives.

**PC User says:** *Expensive, but it's fast, with tons of features.*



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## QNAP TS-209 II

PRICE \$499 / CONTACT BLUECHIP INFOTECH / PHONE 1300 727 474 / WEB www.qnap.com

The TS-209 II is an upgraded version of the TS-201 we looked at last year, but it comes with a more serious price tag. In terms of performance, it's effectively the two-bay version of the TS-109 II (see page 50), with the same processor and memory. Even setting our two WD2500KS hard drives in RAID 0 netted us the second slowest write speed of the group, showing that Gigabit Ethernet can't overcome the sluggish 500MHz processor inside this one. In general, it has

all the same features as the TS-219P (see page 51), except for the hot-swap bays and eSATA ports. With everything from FTP to BitTorrent, printer server and web hosting, it does a lot — albeit not as fast as the TS-219P. What we didn't like was the drive installation; particularly, having to squeeze the drives inside the front gate and then screw in the facade.

**PC User says:** *At this price, you may as well go for the TS-219P instead.*



## QNAP NMP-1000

PRICE \$550 / CONTACT BLUECHIP INFOTECH / PHONE 1300 727 474 / WEB www.qnap.com

It's one of the more expensive players here, but it's worth every penny. The NMP-1000 is in fact a fully functioning NAS device with broad protocol support. It's also a USB mass storage device, capable of being directly connected to a PC by USB or eSATA. It's not without a few flaws, though. It takes too long to start up and shut down, fast-forwarding and rewinding is wonky, and it doesn't support UPnP AV, forcing you to use Windows File Sharing or NFS to access networked media. But if none of those things matter to you, it's a sterling product. Its

interface is attractive and easy to use, and it will automatically scan the network for visible file shares. You can have up to six network shares active as sources, along with up to two USB drives and the QNAP's internal hard disk. It can also draw media from YouTube and Flickr, and an excellent inbuilt BitTorrent client allows you to download directly to the QNAP. It doesn't normally come with a hard disk, but installing one on your own is dead easy. Once a hard disk is installed or attached, it can have its NAS function switched on — any user

on the network can copy files to or from it. The QNAP plays media beautifully for the most part, and it tested well on both our HD LCD screen and on a regular PAL CRT TV. Its media support is also comprehensive. If it had UPnP AV support, it'd be nearly perfect (we're hoping support is only a firmware update away). Even so, it still comes highly recommended, even at the hefty asking price.

**PC User says:** *A NAS device and media player, and a very well built one at that.*

**PC USER BEST BUY**

