



OUTSTANDING



VERY GOOD



GOOD



FLAWED



UNACCEPTABLE

Synology DiskStation DS216play

Aimed at multimedia fans, Synology's DiskStation DS216play packs plenty of streaming video grunt.

You need to supply your own hard drives for this two-bay NAS, which supports RAID0, RAID1 and JBOD drive configurations. There's Gigabit Ethernet on the back along with USB2.0 and USB3.0 (with printer support), but the front USB/SD slots and rear eSATA port of the old DS214play are gone.

This NAS works with Apple's Time Machine or you can install Synology's Cloud Station backup software on your Mac or PC. It's no slouch when it comes to data transfer speeds, sitting neck and neck with the Netgear. For extra protection, you can back up the NAS to USB as well as sync files between DiskStations, computers and a range of cloud services including Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, Box, Amazon S3, Glacier and WebDAV servers.

Synology's strong suite of iOS apps lets you access files remotely as well as back up photos and videos. Meanwhile, Evernote-style features let you store notes, web clippings and a to-do list on the NAS, along with managing your calendar and contacts.

The NAS's app library has plenty of productivity offerings like WordPress and Joolma, but in terms of entertainment Logitech Media Server is the only third-party media server and Synology's mediocre Download Station is the only app for downloads. The NAS is an iTunes and DLNA server, plus it runs Synology's music, video and photo servers supporting the iOS apps.

The glaring omission is Plex. The lack of Plex will be a deal-breaker in some homes (it might be available further down the track), but in return the new processor offers hardware video transcoding handling Ultra HD streaming – which you might chalk up as future-proofing due to Australia's current dearth of Ultra HD content beyond Netflix.



SYNOLOGY

www.synology.com

PROS Video grunt; impressive iOS apps

CONS No Plex

\$369 WITHOUT DRIVES

Netgear ReadyNAS RN202

Designed for prosumers and small businesses, Netgear's ReadyNAS RN202 is one with the lot.

This two-bay NAS can be configured as RAID0, RAID1 or JBOD, but you'll need to supply your own hard drives. It features two rear USB3.0 ports – supporting printers – along with eSATA for connecting high-speed external drives. There's also a second Gigabit Ethernet port to improve performance and reliability.

The ReadyNAS supports Apple's Time Machine, plus there's PC backup software. Netgear also offers several iOS apps, with the ability to upload photos on the road, but it can't match Synology's range of dedicated multimedia apps.

Behind the scenes the RN202 uses the advanced BTRFS file system to help protect your data, but it's still better to be safe than sorry. When it comes to backing up the ReadyNAS you'll find a third USB3.0 port on the front with a programmable button for triggering backup schedules. You can back up to USB devices, computers, other ReadyNASes and the cloud – but disappointingly only to Dropbox or Netgear's ReadyNAS Vault.

Netgear's extensive NAS app library makes the RN202 a real Swiss Army knife. Business users have access to WordPress, Joomla, MySQL, OpenERP, SugarCRM and a CalDAV/CardDAV server among others. Those chasing entertainment options can call upon Plex, Logitech Media Server, Transmission, NZBGet, Sickbeard and more. The ReadyNAS can also act as an iTunes and DLNA server for streaming content around your home.

Under the bonnet the RN202 packs a 1.4GHz dual-core ARM processor accompanied by a generous 2GB of RAM – a powerful step up from Netgear's consumer-grade RN102. All that grunt helps Plex sing while the 2GB of RAM is especially useful if you intend to run several demanding apps on the NAS.



NETGEAR

www.netgear.com

PROS Powerful; extensive app library

CONS Expensive; limited cloud storage support

\$509 WITHOUT DRIVES