



- 2 X 3.5IN DRIVE BAYS
- 2 X SAMSUNG 2TB HD203WI DRIVES
- 4 X USB 2.0
- AJAX INTERFACE



\$649

8
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- 4 X 3.5IN DRIVE BAYS
- 4 X 1TB WD CAVIAR GREEN HARD DRIVES
- 3 X USB 2.0 PORTS
- MIONET FOR REMOTE FILE ACCESS

\$799

7
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Thecus N2200 4TB

- www.thecus.com
- Excellent price per terabyte; small footprint.
- Sluggish interface.

A Tardis of storage – this box has plenty of space inside.

Unless you're already a NAS boffin, the name Thecus is probably Greek to you. A relatively new company founded in 2004, its sole focus is the creation of storage solutions, with a focus on networked devices. We were recently impressed by the budget baby N0204, so had high hopes for its bigger brother, the N2200.

This twin bay NAS won't win any awards for good looks, but it's got one of the smallest footprints for a 4TB device in our roundup. Installing new drives couldn't be easier, with a tool-less design allowing for quick hot swaps. As it only has two drive bays, the RAID options are limited to 0, 1 and JBOD. Even though it's actively cooled by a 60mm fan, there's very little noise pollution, even with both drives thrashing simultaneously. Four USB 2.0 ports provide plenty of room for external drives, but there's no eSATA support in sight.

For such a small box, it's quite surprising to see the amount of functionality squeezed inside. DLNA and iTunes serving are present, as are email alerts for hardware failure, USB print serving and UPnP. A nice touch is the support for various modes of scheduled downloads, including BitTorrent, HTTP and FTP. It can even be used as a standalone security box, able to record from two IP cameras (not included).

Using an AJAX interface, this is another NAS that shuns Windows Home Server in favour of a proprietary solution. Setting up via this interface is relatively easy, though enabling many of the more advanced features will require extensive reading of the 100-page manual. Unfortunately it's also not the most responsive interface, with regular pausing when updating options or changing tabs.

If you're not looking for the quickest speeds, the N2200 offers excellent value for money yet retains most of the features the average home user requires.

WD ShareSpace 4TB

- www.wdc.com
- Masses of storage space.
- Only accepts WD drives; limited feature set.

This NAS offers decent bang for your buck.

With a long history in storage, it's no surprise that WD offers one of the easiest-to-use NAS devices in our roundup. Thanks to its custom interface, getting this box to share files on your network is a breeze.

Like most of the devices in the roundup, this box shuns the Windows Home Server Console, instead utilising a custom WD-built interface called WD Discovery, accessed via your web browser. It's extremely responsive and well laid out, with the basic option perfect for those who just want to share files. Switching to advanced unveils a plethora of functions, which are still easy enough to understand for NAS noobs.

DLNA and iTunes serving are both included, as is remote access of files via WD's MioNet service. If a drive volume fails, the ShareSpace can automatically notify you via email, while WD's excellent automatic downloading interface allows you to grab files while you and your main PC are sleeping.

With four 1TB drives, the ShareSpace has plenty of room to spare. In our review sample, the drives were installed in a standard RAID 5 configuration, allowing for decent performance as well as data recovery. Unfortunately these drives can't be hot swapped, but at least they're easy enough to access. Because there are so many drives, a 90mm cooling fan is installed at the rear of the case. It's relatively quiet, but not totally silent like the passively cooled NAS devices.

Connectivity is lacking, with only two USB 2.0 ports on the rear, and another on the front. Backup functionality is also limited to only three PCs, as the included WD Anywhere software only has three licences.

If you're looking for enough storage space to keep a family's worth of memories in one box, the ShareSpace offers a very competitive price per gigabyte. However, this ageing box isn't getting any younger, and it misses out on some of the cool new tricks that other NAS devices offer.