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More Than Just Storage

Synology Cube Station CS-406

BY CPU-ZILLA

It's no surprise that new storage servers like the Synology Cube Station can offer more than just file sharing and large storage capacities. With more powerful low-cost processors and open source codes made available, manufacturers like Synology are putting extremely great value into their file storage products by offering server class features that could transform how you compute at home or office.

Apart from sharing files, the Synology Cube Station CS-406 can be easily configured to host web pages. Creating web pages on the CS-406 is as simple as dropping HTML files into a shared folder. Other than static HTML pages, the Cube Station also allows you to create dynamic web content. It supports the popular PHP scripting language and it comes pre-installed with MySQL database. Thus, web applications that usually take advantage of both PHP and MySQL should run smoothly on the Cube Station.

We tested the Cube Station with phpMyAdmin (www.phpmyadmin.net), a freely available MySQL administration tool scripted in PHP. Using phpMyAdmin, creating and managing databases were easily done through a friendly web GUI. We also tested it with phpBB (www.phpbb.com), a free PHP-based bulletin board script. The script was installed in less than a minute and

it even created its own database automatically – similar to how it is typically done in a Linux-based web server.

Besides that, the Cube Station also comes with a photo sharing tool that uses the web interface to host pictures. When connected to the internet, it becomes your personal photo album that also has the ability to set access permissions. Photos are uploaded through a particular shared folder created by the Cube Station and albums are simply sorted with folders.

The Cube Station CS-406 supports four SATA hard disk drives and users are expected to install the hard drives into the box themselves. Following the instructions provided, it doesn't take users long to have all the drives integrated. However, we didn't like the way cable is managed in the Cube Station and neither was it easy to remove the hard drive if either one of them fails. It would have been better if the Cube Station was equipped with hot swappable hard drive trays that could facilitate instant replacement of drives. Thus, expect to have the system shut down for maintenance should any of the drives failed. That aside, the Cube Station CS-406 supports RAID 0, 1 or 5 arrays. Thus, with four 500GB hard drives on a RAID 5 configuration, it could have a monstrous capacity of up to 1.5TB.

File sharing on the Cube Station is simple as it allows the creation of up to 1024 users and 128 groups if used in a workgroup environment and it can be integrated into an existing Windows domain if needed. We tested the transfer throughput of the Synology Cube Station with CrystalMark and Iometer and compared it to similar RAID 5 storage boxes like the Buffalo TeraStation Pro. Write performance with CrystalMark was impressive, but with a more strenuous test (Iometer), the performance of the Synology Cube Station was only somewhat on-par with the Buffalo TeraStation Pro.

Overall, the Synology Cube Station CS-406 is an all-purpose box that does not only offer file serving capabilities, but a mini all-in-one web server as well. It's an ideal low-cost server suitable for both the home and small office.

SPECIFICATIONS

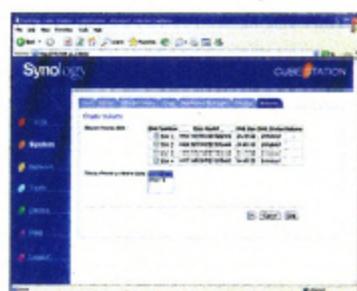
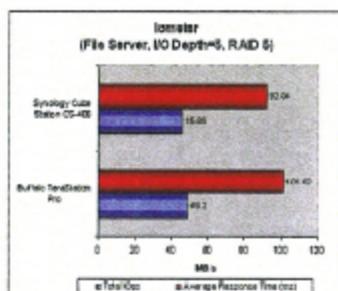
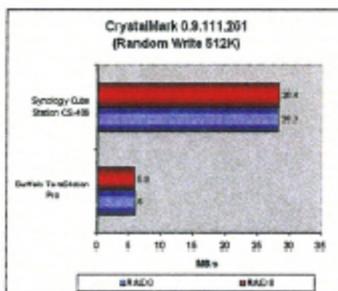
Capacity	No. of Drives	Interface	Warranty	Price
more than 1.0TB	Four	Gigabit	One year	\$51,099

Model No.: CS-406
Capacity: > 1.0TB
No. of Drives: Four (not included)
Drive Type: 3.5-inch SATA
Interface: Gigabit Ethernet, 2x USB 2.0
Features: CIFS, AppleTalk, FTP, Windows ADS/NT4 Domain, UPnP, PHP 5.1.2, MySQL 4.1.15, Photo Station, Web Station, Download Station
Dimensions: 168 x 230 x 184mm
Weight: 2.23kg (not including drives)

HWM'S VERDICT

Physique: **9.0**
 Features: **9.5**
 User-friendliness: **8.0**
 Performance: **9.0**
 Value: **9.5**

9.0
Out of 10



Configuring the Cube Station is made easy through its built-in web GUI.

A revolutionary storage product with the power to serve dynamic web pages as well.

