

# Synology DS415play & DS415+ NAS

SYNOLOGY CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AN EXCELLENT NAS RANGE

The core function of a NAS is to store your files and share them over a network, but these days they're also home servers, doing much more than simply file serving. They're used as VPN clients, personal web servers and predominately media servers, streaming TV shows and movies around the home to TVs, tablets and smartphones. Synology has recognised this and made its NAS units extremely versatile and easy to use servers, as well as excellent storage devices. The new DS415play and DS415+ exemplify the NAS as a server paradigm.

The DS415play and DS415+ look identical and are very similar in price, and are even quite close in terms of specs. The DS415+ is a more enterprise-focussed unit, with dual gigabit ports as to use 802.3a link aggregation for more bandwidth, 2GB of RAM as to run more apps simultaneously, a quad core 2.4GHz CPU and built in AES-NI hardware encryption. The DS415play has a dual core Intel Atom CPU that operates at 1.6GHz, 1GB of RAM and a single gigabit Ethernet port. Despite its slower CPU, the DS415play has an ingenious feature built in to its Intel CPU called QuickSync, which allows real-time transcoding of 1080p video. Even though the DS415+ has a faster CPU, it doesn't contain the QuickSync feature and doesn't transcode on the fly like the DS415play. Extremely useful for those who buy a NAS wanting it to store and stream their TV and movie collection.

The big strength of the Synology range of NAS units is their DiskStorage Manager software (DSM), which is updated regularly and upgraded to support new features on older units. The DSM firmware is feature filled – AFP, SMB 3, SSH, FTP, NFS, Time Machine and a whole lot more protocols are supported to get your files on or off the NAS. A Synology unit can integrate into an Active Directory environment easily, can connect to PPTP, OpenVPN or L2TP VPNs, or even act as a VPN server. Remote access to your Synology NAS is simple too. Using the QuickConnect feature, you can sign in to your NAS via the Internet and access the files from a smartphone, tablet, or any web browser. There's even the ability to plug in a USB Wi-Fi dongle and use your NAS as a wireless access point. On the Synology units with two or more Ethernet ports, you can even use your NAS as a quite well featured router – just plug in a modem, or if you're on the NBN, plug the NAS right in to your NTU.

DSM's true power comes from its wide range of apps. Synology have a collection of great video and audio apps, exposing the files on your NAS to all the media playback devices you can think of. The brilliant Plex Media Server is even officially supported and updated by the Plex team. Thanks to the transcoding feature on the DS415play, Plex really shines, allowing 1080p playback to any other Plex supported media device. There's all



manner of cloud backup apps too, with the ability to easily sync data between multiple Synology devices, creating off-site backups and sync data on your NAS to all the popular cloud storage providers.

Synology hasn't skimped on mobile apps either. The DS file and DS video apps include Chromecast support on iOS and Android, so watching the videos stored on your NAS is as simple as plugging in a Chromecast or an Apple TV into your TV and using your smartphone or tablet to stream to the big screen. On the DS415play, it doesn't even matter what format the videos are in, as the NAS will transcode any format video in the right format for the Chromecast or AppleTV to play back smoothly.

For most home users, the DS415play is very impressive. It's an all in one box that can literally do it all. The ability to transcode video and play back using a Chromecast really makes things easy. The large app selection and third party app community mean if there's a specific set of apps you want to run on your server, chances are it's already there. The DS415+ is also a great unit and very fast, but unless you intend on running many apps and serving more than a handful of people, stick with the DS415play and enjoy the transcoding feature it offers.

**Anthony Agius**

## KEY SPECS

### DS415play \$605 - DS415+ \$660

XDS415play: 4x SATA 3 2.5"/3.5" drive bays • Intel Atom Dual Core 1.6GHz CPU • 1GB DDR3 RAM • 2x USB 3.0 & 3x USB 2.0 • 1x Gigabit Ethernet

DS415+: 4x SATA 3 2.5"/3.5" drive bays • Intel Atom C2538 Quad Core 2.4GHz • 2GB DDR3 RAM • 2x USB 3.0 & 1x USB 2.0 • eSATA X 1 • 2x Gigabit Ethernet

## OVERALL

