$600 (DISKLESS) | WWW.SYNOLOGY.COM

Synology DiskStation DS716+II

Caught in the middle.

Synology's premier two-bay device, the DiskStation DS716+II is a powerful and very fast NAS, capable of providing much more than just media and file services.

Synology's firmware provides a full GUI through its web interface, with movable windows, icons, and status and notification bars. It also has the ability to install a huge host of first-party and third-party apps and services onto the NAS.

Pretty much any server application you can think of is available, including syncing apps, cloud backup, IP telephony, virtualisation, content management and web publishing, backup, streaming servers, email services, web caching, VPN and security services, wikis, customer relationship management and antivirus.

Of particular note are a simple cloud-based office solution for editing stored documents in a web browser (like a trimmed down Google Docs) as well as arguably the best IP camera surveillance manager available with a NAS.
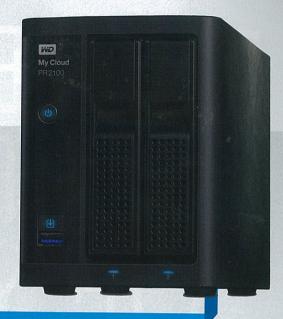
It delivered the fastest read/write performance of any tested NAS, and the hardware looks great and supports easy disk swapping, as well as passive CPU cooling.

However, there are some disappointments. The inclusion of only 2GB of memory can limit its usefulness. It also sits in the nowhere land between the all-out Asustor and more affordable QNAP, and we would find ourselves generally leaning one way or the other. But still, this is an excellent NAS overall, with one of the industry's best firmware solutions and powerful underlying hardware.

Verdict

Great firmware, powerful hardware and fast, but rather expensive given it only has 2GB of memory.

★★★★☆

$599 (DISKLESS) | WWW.WD.COM

WD My Cloud Pro Series PR2100

Impressive internals, but limited.

One of the newest entries in the WD My Cloud series, the PR2100 boasts some impressive hardware, on par with the Asustor and Synology NASs. But it fails to do enough with that hardware, with a limited suite of services and tools.

Now there's nothing wrong with having a simple tabbed interface. For people who mostly just want the basics of file and media services, that's perfectly fine, especially if coupled with solid mobile and desktop apps. But if you're going to crank up the hardware and the price as WD have done here, you also need to include more stuff to do with that hardware. But WD's lineup of services — first- and third-party — is rather anaemic. It still provides the same services as the cheaper devices in WD's lineup, and the more powerful hardware seems a little pointless.

On the upside, WDs mobile and desktop support apps are among the best in class, especially for backup. It does provide antivirus, and the inclusion of a server target for Acronis True Home makes this a premium choice for people looking primarily for backup. It's also very easy to administer the NAS, with WDs Cloud OS among the most straightforward and well explained NAS operating systems around.

Installing new drives is totally toolless (you just slide them in and out, which is nice), and you can seamlessly add extra USB drives by plugging them into one of the USB 3.0 ports. There's an extra power port for redundancy and a second Ethernet port for failover and load balancing as well.

Verdict

The server app selection is too limited for the impressive hardware, but it's very easy to use.

★★★☆☆