



Netgear ReadyNAS RN102

Netgear brings a wider range of technologies to its latest NAS products

DETAILS

- Price: £156.35
- Manufacturer: Netgear
- Website: www.netgear.co.uk
- Required Spec: Ethernet network, SATA drive mechanisms

Netgear got into the NAS box business a few years ago when it bought ReadyNAS, a name it still uses for its storage product range.

The ReadyNAS RN102 either comes with two drives pre-installed or as an empty box that can be filled with whatever SATA storage you have handy - our review model being the latter variant. The biggest SATA drives are 4TB currently, giving the potential for 8TB in this box, or half that if you select a mirror mode for drive redundancy.

Computing power for the unit comes from a Marvell

Armada 370 1.2GHz, yet another SoC (System on Chip) ARMv7 derivative, of the type you'd normally see in a Smartphone or tablet. This is more than powerful enough to drive general file serving with gusto, and only those wanting more software services running on their NAS box will consider it a limiting factor

Visually the RN102 has an understated look that I warmed to, it's very angular but is generally well constructed. On the front is the door that hides the drive trays, power and backup buttons, along with a single USB 2.0 port and some illuminated indicators.

On the rear are the Gigabit LAN port, eSATA and two USB 3.0 ports for extending the storage possibilities. Having those blue ports is a big selling point, as it means you could backup the drive to an external mechanism without taking an age doing it.



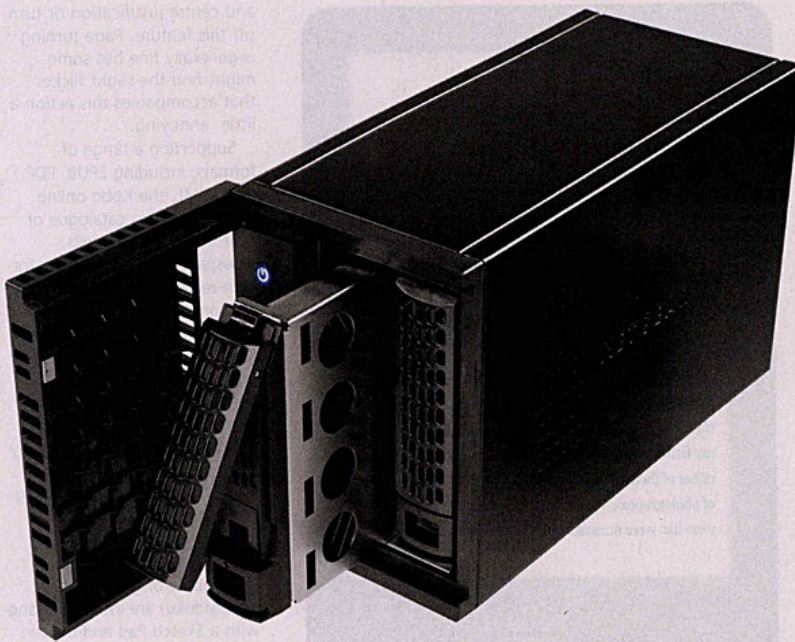
Another interesting feature is that the drive trays don't require tiny screws to hold the storage in place. Instead they've got a flexible plastic sleeve that extends out to capture the drive and then hold it firmly in place. These seem flimsy, but I prefer them

to screws - which are easily lost and require more dexterity needed to use.

Let's be honest, though: most people will put this machine somewhere they can't see it and only put the drives in once. This makes the firmware, and how well it works, far more important than such design issues.

In this case the latest ReadyNAS web interface is rather polished, and can be easily navigated to activate the wide range of features, or install new software modules. This feels very much like what Synology offers, though Netgear don't go quite as far in terms of creating a virtual desktop. There's some great functionality on offer, though, including Netgear's own ReadyCLOUD service, Dropbox synchronisation, DLNA along with all the other media services that NAS box owners might expect. If the service you want isn't a standard one you can access the Genie+ Marketplace, from where 53 more tools can be applied. Some are free, others costs a

ReadyNas 100 Series Model	RN102	RN104
CPU	Marvell Armada 370 1.2GHz	Marvell Armada 370 1.2GHz
Memory	512MB	512MB
Drive Bays	2	4
Drive Types Supported	SATA/SSD 2.5" or 3.5"	SATA/SSD 2.5" or 3.5"
Max Capacity Internal	8TB	16TB
Gigabit LAN Ports	1	2
USB Ports	1x USB 2.0, 2x USB 3.0, 1x eSATA	1x USB 2.0, 2x USB 3.0, 1x eSATA
Power Supply	12V, 5A External 60W: input 100-240V AC, 50/60Hz	12V, 7A External 90W: input 100-240V AC, 50-60Hz
Power Consumption: Operation	31W	45.6W
Power Consumption (Wake on LAN)	1.0W	1.4W
Power Consumption: Power Off	210mW	440mW
Chassis Warranty	3 years	3 years
2-line LCD Display	No	Yes
Fan (mm)	92	92
Dimensions DxWxH (mm)	220 x 101 x 142	223 x 134 x 205
Weight (kg)	2.12	4.70



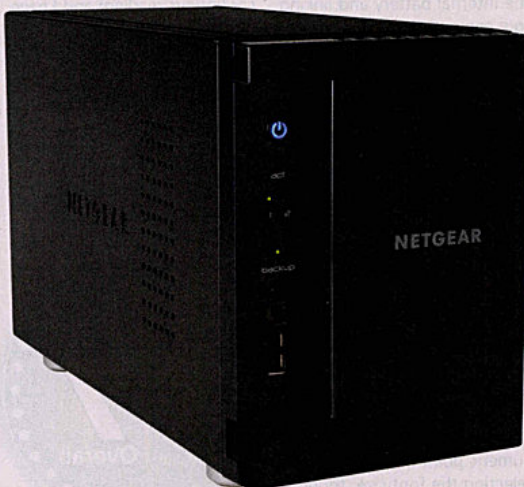
solution online and executed the Factory Reset sequence needed, but I'm confident that less experienced users would be stumped by this entirely predictable problem.

Despite that hiccup, I enjoyed almost everything else the RN102 had to offer. With unpartitioned drives it's quick to get operational, and even on a single drive you can get +50MB/s write speed, and even faster reading.

With big drives being relatively inexpensive, this two drive unit could offer a significant media store of 2TB for a little over £200, which is a bargain by my reckoning. For those who want more, Netgear also make the four drive RN104 with twice the capacity, but is almost identical in almost all other respects.

For the money, I think Netgear is on to a winner here, as this is exactly the type of NAS box that most people will want.

mm Mark Pickavance



few pounds. Using these you can add Python, MySQL, a Torrent client, and many other useful things. There are, however, some places where Netgear needs to smarten up its act. Specifically, it's still using the old RAIDar application (with its Windows 2000 styling) it inherited with the ReadyNAS business.

The test drive mechanism I used still had an old Windows partition on and, upon discovering this, RAIDar concluded that it had a 'Corrupted Root'. The solution to this problem was a horribly complicated one involving a paper-clip and a menu of flashing LEDs. When it should have been an easily accessible option from this utility, really. Being astute, I found the

The best entry level NAS box from Netgear yet

