



ReadyNAS Ultra 4

A versatile do-it-yourself network storage system

Pros: Lets you install and upgrade drives as required; easy to set up and use; automatic RAID configuration

Cons: Expensive; multimedia features of limited use to Mac users

Star Rating: ★★★★★

Company: Netgear, www.netgear.co.uk
Price: £459

Netgear's Stora is a good option for home users who are buying a NAS drive for the first time, but for more experienced users the company also offers its ReadyNAS Ultra range.

There are several models in the range but we tested the ReadyNAS Ultra 4, a RAID unit equipped with four separate drive bays. You can buy the Ultra 4 as an empty chassis for about £450, and then install your own choice of drives as required. Alternatively, you can buy it for about £700 with two 2TB drives already installed and the remaining two drive bays left free for future upgrades.

Installing drives is a simple process, as the drive bays pop open with a press of a button.



Store up to 4TB The ReadyNAS Ultra is a flexible and reliable storage system ideal for power users and home businesses

Netgear's XRAID2 feature also allows you to hot swap drives at any time, automatically configuring the RAID options depending on the number of drives installed. Other hardware features include two Gigabit Ethernet ports and

no less than three USB ports for connecting additional storage units, or devices such as a digital camera.

Setup is straightforward, with a Setup Wizard for newcomers or manual configuration for more experienced users. Some of the additional features built into the ReadyNAS may not mean much to Mac users, such as its ability to work with TiVo digital video recorders, and its support for DLNA networking (Apple ignores DLNA the same way it ignores Flash video and Blu-ray). However, it can also act as an iTunes server, allowing you to use it as a central storage device for your iTunes music library on your home network. It also works with Time Machine, so you can back up your Mac across the network too.

Macworld's buying advice

If you just want a simple and affordable NAS drive for your home network then you might be better off with the less expensive Stora. However, the ability to configure the ReadyNAS Ultra 4 in any way you want makes it a good option for small businesses and more experienced home users who need a versatile and reliable storage system.

Cliff Joseph