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\$395 on Amazon \$450 in best Buy \$189 on Adorama Nate Ralph/CNET With terabytes of photos, videos and various things scattered across five computers, I'm probably the perfect candidate for network storage (NAS) devices. So when Western Digital's WD My Cloud EX2 Ultra, a dual bay server, crossed my desk, you might consider my interest piqued. We loved the original My Cloud EX2, a simple plug-in and play option for people wanting to argue storage through their home network. And the EX2 Ultra is almost identical. You get the same simple body, with LED lights that show the state of the EX2 Ultra discs. On the back side you'll find the Gigabit Ethernet port, which connects the drive to your home network, and a couple of USB 3.0 ports. You can use these USB 3.0 ports to add a little more storage space to the EX 2 Ultra, or connect the NAS to a backup destination. Ultra offers a slightly faster 1.3GHz dual-core processor and twice as much RAM, bumping up to 1GB. (NAS drives mostly few dedicated servers, so reasonably lightning-fast hardware calculates.) The setup is delightfully simple: simply plug in the NAS server and connect it to your home network via the Ethernet port. The drive will show up on your home network, in Windows Explorer or Finder on Apple's OS X, and you can just drag and drop files at your leisure. Nas is DLNA-enabled and also supports Plex, so the music and videos you drop on it will pop up on Plex with support apps and media players on devices such as Roku, Apple TV and gaming consoles. Nate Ralph/CNET If you're willing to download the software and subscribe to a Western Digital account, EX2 Ultra offers a number of additional cloud-oriented features. My Cloud is my favorite of them, as it gives you remote access to everything on the drive from the browser, or through the free apps available for Android and iOS. And the appeal of the personal cloud is strong: having access to my raw photos, where I have a web connection, is an excruciating prospect. I just have to pop into the MyCloud Western Digital site, log in and see what I've stored on the drive. Although a little cumbersome, it's comfortable enough; I would appreciate the ability to sync folders on a remote computer with one on NAS automatically, as many other NAS servers can do so. At least the EX2 Ultra saves me from the kind of subscription fees I'd see if I tried to store so many things on services such as Dropbox. I'd still certainly hold onto my Crashplan account, for the peace of mind that a proper backup solution behind its place gives, but having ready, convenient access to my things is a nice touch. Nate Ralph/CNET It is worth noting that while the new EX2 Ultra is clearly a step up from its predecessor, it still lags behind the NAS servers from such both Synology and NOP, in terms of features, functionality, and the number of applications supported. But the EX2 Ultra is a little friendlier to non-techies, and it tends to tend to than competition, too. No drives \$160,135 AU\$225 4TB \$350 245 AUS\$493 8TB \$450 390 AU\$633 12TB \$600 520 AUS\$444 EX2 Ultra is available without hard drives (add your own), or in 4TB, 8TB and 12TB configurations. Naturally, pre-populated versions come with two of Western Digital's WD Red hard drives. But if you get a drive-less version, you can just pop the cover open, and use a pair of standard SATA desktop hard drives from another vendor. The 8TB model we're testing comes pre-configured in RAID 1, which means it actually has 4GB of available capacity; data is reflected on both drives to keep the data intact if the disk fails. You can set up the drive in RAID 0 to access the full 8TB, but you risk losing data there - you can read more about RAID configurations here. Nate Ralph/CNET iOS and Android apps are useful if not very useful to me. You can automatically upload photos and videos made from mobile devices directly to the drive, but I'm pretty comfortable letting Apple and Google's native photo functionality handle this. Downloading files from drive to phone is easy and can prove useful, but then again, I turn to services such as Dropbox and Google Drive for most of my needs. And playback is limited to the fact that your mobile device can be a native handle: that pretty much eliminates my raw files and more esoteric video formats I have kicked about. But in my anecdotal testing on my home network, it was noticeably fast. Stay tuned for our complete tests though, as we see how this new model stacks up to the competition. Competition. wd ex2 ultra. wd ex2 ultra manual. wd ex2 ultra setup. wd ex2 ultra review. wd ex2 ultra firmware. wd ex2 ultra software. wd ex2 ultra compatible hard drives. wd ex2 ultra 8tb

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