

THE WINNER QNAP TS-251+

Sizing up the right fit for your needs

Where speed's your primary need, and you need a large capacity for gigantic files such as 4K video, the choice is straightforward: a Thunderbolt 2 drive with RAID. In this regard, LaCie's drive wins by a whisker – it's that bit faster overall, and is more affordable per terabyte. At the other end of the scale, the Seagate Innov8's price left us cold, despite it not needing a plug socket.

For most people, such a large capacity is better utilised as a shared space, so you'll want a NAS drive. (Some routers can turn a basic USB drive – USB-A, anyway – into a shared drive, though often they're leaner on features than a dedicated NAS.) If your needs are relatively simple, WD's MyCloud EX2100 is more than sufficient for your needs, but if you want an all-singing, all-dancing model



that can run multiple services while streaming media, QNAP's TS-251+ comes out on top. The QNAP drive isn't perfect – there's a learning curve and the interface is fussy at times – but its stellar spec, broad app support and good transfer rates make it worth the effort.



Alex says...

> While drive capacities are outstripping the average Joe's needs, I can see why those working with large media files would need a drive with lots of wiggle room. If that applies to you, LaCie's 2big Thunderbolt 2 is a no-brainer – it's fast, flexible and has room for expansion.

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> How do they compare?



THE SPECS	>G-TECH	>LACIE	>SEAGATE	>TRANSCEND	>WD	>QNAP
MODEL	G-RAID Thunderbolt 2	2big Thunderbolt 2	Innov8	StoreJet 35T3	MyCloud EX2100	TS-251+
PRICE	£579	£479	£336	£235	£420	£442
DIMENSIONS (WxDxH), WEIGHT	13x23.5x8.7cm, 2.7kg	10.9x21.7x13cm, 2.7kg	12.4x20.8x3.6cm, 1.5kg	4.5x15.2x17.2cm, 1.04kg	10.9x21.6x14.8cm, 3.25kg	10.2x22.5x10.2cm, 2.32kg
CAPACITY TESTED	8TB (2x 4TB)	6TB (2x 3TB)	8TB (1x 8TB)	8TB (1x 8TB)	4TB (2x 4TB)	6TB (2x 3TB)
RAID LEVELS	RAID 0 (preconfigured), RAID 1, JBOD	RAID 0 (preconfigured), RAID 1, JBOD	n/a	n/a	RAID 0, RAID 1 (preconfigured), JBOD	RAID 0, RAID 1 (preconfigured), JBOD
PROCESSOR, MEMORY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.3GHz Marvell Armada 385 (dual-core), 1GB	2GHz Celeron (quad-core), 2GB
CONNECTIVITY	2x Thunderbolt 2, USB-A (USB 3.0)	2x Thunderbolt 2, USB-A (USB 3.0)	USB-C (USB 3.1)	USB-A (USB 3.0)	2x Gigabit Ethernet, (with link aggregation)	2x Gigabit Ethernet (with link aggregation)
EXTRAS	Power button	Power/standby button	Bus-powered	One-touch backup button, and a deep sleep mode	Power button, 2x USB-A (3.0) ports (one each on front and rear; front-facing port has one-click copy button)	Power button, one-touch copy, 2x USB-A (3.0, one on front), 2x USB-A (2.0), HDMI, remote control
>DESIGN	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
>PERFORMANCE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
>FEATURES	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
>OVERALL	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★