



Some of you may or may not know what a NAS is or even a RAID, but if you use a computer at some point you are going to have to deal with backup of your data or the need for more storage or both. You can easily add external storage via USB device to your local machine but what if you have many PCs on a network and what if those are not all windows? A Network Attached Storage (NAS) device could be a good solution for you. This is a device that simply plugs into your homes router and can be seen by all of your computers. It then used as any other storage area on your PC but all users can see the storage and exchange data there due to it being on the network.

A NAS is a common way for businesses to store data and a RAID is a way to have redundancy in the storage device so it is safe. The Drobo is both a NAS and a RAID (well it is kind of a RAID but more on that later) The model Drobo we installed was the Drobo FS. This is a storage device that can have up to 5 hard drives internal to it. You buy them and put in how many you want. . The more drives you install the more storage you can have and/or the level of redundancy of the data for safety.

Installing the Drobo could not be simpler. You simply buy the number of drives you want and slide them into the slots in the Drobo. Once that is done there is some software you need to install on a PC to manage some of the Drobo settings but you do not have to have this PC running when you use the Drobo. Once your drives are installed in it plug it into your network switch via Ethernet (there is also a USB version if you want that) and turn it on. The Drobo configures the hard drives and comes to life. This takes about 5 minutes the first time you start it. Once that is done you can use the Drobo software to tell it if you want more redundancy, more storage and less redundancy etc...it is really up to you. The Drobo is not a RAID but does exactly the same thing a RAID does in assuring that your data is duplicated and a single disk

going bad in the Drobo will not cause you to loose your data. They state it is NOT a RAID but their software assures redundancy...not sure how it does it but that is proprietary, we will take their word for it.

We used the Drobo on a network with many Windows OS laptops and PCs. We also have MACs on this network as well. The drive was easy to map just like any other external device and it worked well. We put 3 disks in the Drobo and it defaulted to a configuration which had single disk failure redundancy so while we did not get the full use of all three disks we did get most of it.

On the whole we liked the Drobo, it was easy to configure and manage and a snap to install. Having an external shared storage area is a really great feature. You can configure it and the directories on it just like any other directory on your PC. You can lock down the permissions, restrict access with your native operating system. If you have never used a NAS before you should have no issue with the Drobo and not only will you be adding storage you will be assuring your data is kept safe!!