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Three Network Storage Devices To Take Seriously

4:00 PM EST Mon. Aug. 15, 2011

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Domo Arigato, Data Roboto

Data Robotics on July 18 paid homage to its storage products by taking their name. And worthy of such praise it is. The Drobo B800i iSCSI Storage SAN for Business might just be the easiest RAID array that we've ever set up.

While it might not be the cheapest SAN appliance at $3,999 list unpopulated, the eight-bay Drobo B800i more than makes up for its price tag by eliminating the need for an experienced administrator. Thanks to its embedded system, the administrator's qualifications are reduced to the ability to recognize blue, green, yellow and red LEDs.

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Drobo Not Drab-o

Nothing drab here. The slick-looking Drobo Dashboard admin tool is by far the easiest iSCSI software we've seen to configure. Drive formatting choices include NTFS, multi-host and none; NTFS, HFS+ and FAT32 file systems are supported (EXT3 is in beta). Capacity is selected with a slider in 2TB increments; the company's proprietary BeyondRAID software selects the RAID level automatically.

Once volumes and network settings are set, the tool is only really needed for taking basic data snapshots. Once sold separately, the Drobo Copy tool (seen here for Mac OS X) can be set on a schedule and includes features such as file exclusions, basic synchronization and multiple levels of reporting. A Windows version also is included.

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