



Nordost QNET

WINNER

DIGITAL COMPONENT: NETWORK SWITCH



With QNET, Nordost essentially draws together the amassed knowledge of what makes a good audio-grade network switch, and both builds upon that knowledge and adds its own distinct Nordost-shaped improvements to the mix. The five-port QNET features three 1Gbit/s and two 100Mbits/s ports, with the two 100Mbits per second ports designed specifically for the audio side of the network (streamer and NAS drive, for example). The QNET is also unique among network switches in being hockey-puck shaped. This allows the five ports to be physically separated from one another, compared to the usual side-by-side connections, to counter the radiation patterns of typical RJ45 connectors. The puck-shaped switch is too small to house a decent power supply, so Nordost provides an external supply, that can be upgraded with the linear supply of QSource.

In our test, Alan Sircom was very impressed by the switch. “QNET goes to the next level, as befits what is very likely the next generation in a fast-moving subset of audio,” he said. Adding, “What QNET does better than the network switches I’ve tried thus far is make the music sound more ‘believable’. I think this might be the ‘electronicky’ sound that some think sets physical discs apart from their streamed and downloaded counterparts.”

He concluded by saying, “Thanks to Nordost’s QNET, network audio just took a leap forward in listenability. It makes your streamed music sound more like music and it’s only when you realise just how far from that goal we usually are with networked audio that you begin to understand how important this humble-looking audiophile hockey puck is going to be.” And it gets even better with its QSource upgrade!

Reviewed in Issue **209**

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