Nordost QNET 7

WINNER
NETWORK SWITCH

A s Ethernet devices send data in packetised form, the chances of data being corrupted in transmission are effectively zero. However, a lot of noise is inherent to the transmission process and can undermine sensitive audio equipment reading that data. The best audiophile switches, such as Nordost's QNET 7, specifically address 'audio intrusive' electromagnetic interference and noise in the radio frequency bands.

While audiophile switches commonly use 100Mbps (100BASE-TX) ports, only one of this new QNET switch's seven nicely spaced-out ports does. Five are faster Gigabit Ethernet (1000BASE-T) ports – Nordost found them quieter when used with NAS devices and routers – while another is compatible with both 1000 BASE-T and fibre-optic SFP transceiver modules. Like the original QNET (which remains in the

Nordost lineup, sitting below this new model), the QNET 7 is a layer 2 switch, meaning it doesn't just repeat physical signals (as layer 1 switches do) to connected devices, but instead intelligently forwards data to the appropriate address on a local network. It too uses Nordost's QSOURCE linear power supply, but this time it sports a more conventional shape, facilitating optional placement on four isolation Nordost Sort Kones.

QNET, elevated

The original QNET lets the music be smooth-sounding within an expansive, depthy soundstage, and helps bring out a system's detail and dynamic range. The QNET 7 does this and more. "It gets you further into the music and pushes that interference further into the shadows," reads Alan Sircom's review. "Detail is brought into even sharper focus and clarity" and "music hangs together better". The QNET 7 is so good, it might well be the gateway to a whole host of Nordost products.

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