December 27, 2021

Multi purpose audio server

Digital media is no doubt the current trend of things in almost all of our daily lives. In audio world this is not exception. Many have tried to tap into the benefit digital media can offer for audio and is very common this days to see streaming as the source. Many brands have come out with different kind of solution to digital playback no matter is physical media or streaming. It is always a dream to have many different features or functions that can be found in one box. Is not doubt value for money is one key consideration on media box. Myself have personally like CD very much but don't quite like to have a CD player. My alternate option is to have a digital player to play the CD that has been ripped into wav files or other file format. Of course consideration of storage as well but price for storage is very affordable. Not much of concern. As I was looking for storage, I came across this Japanese company IO-Data (https://www.iodata.jp/fidata/en/) . Its a company that produces hard disk and storage. What is interesting about the company is it takes interest in audio. The company has developed some very high end storage for the sole purpose of audio quality. Being high end the price is also a premium. Not exactly something I was looking for. Looking further in the company product, I came across a more affordable product which is also very interesting with all its functions. (https://www.iodata.jp/ssp/soundgenic/en/). The product is a network server and storage named Soundgenic. After watching some review on youtube and it does look very promising. I took the plunge as it is available in Malaysia.

I made the order and is send from Japan. The thing to take note is this unit is from Japan its all in Japanese language only. The international version will have English language. A little of a bummer but no big deal. The good news is the mobile apps for this server is all in English. ☺ This is a 2 TB model of the network storage server. This is the lowest spec model out of total of 4 different models offer from IO-Data. With some discount I bought online, it came to about RM1300 include shipping. This model has the usual 2TB hard disk and other model come with SSD drive. As a start for me I think this will do.

Out from the box this looks very simple as a black box. The company name in front with Hi-Res audio sticker. No display of any kind except on the top right corner has a small LED light for indicator if the unit is turn on.

On the back is all the connections. From the left is the power with 12V DC input. The next port is the usual LAN port that support 1000mbps. Than it has 2 USB ports with USB 2 and USB 3. There is the hard reset button and follow by the power button. Is pretty simple and the unit is design as headless unit with controls all on mobile apps which is supported by Android and Apple. The unit is pretty much just plug and play. The one thing to take note is the unit need a LAN cable for it to work as this is also a NAS storage itself. There is no WIFI for this unit which I think it make sense.

To setup is very straight forward. First thing is to install the mobile apps of Fidata and connect the soundgenic to your home network via the LAN cable port. Once is turn on, it will be auto
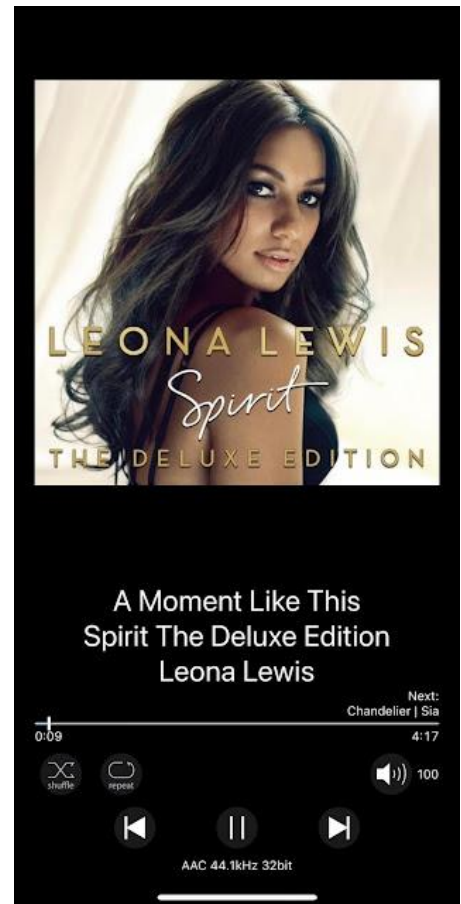

recognized by your network as a network storage device. The storage can be accessible from your normal windows or mac machines as a network drive. Pretty much can copy anything into the storage as if this is a normal hard disk on the network. Once the files are inside the storage , it can be use any other devices within the

same network.

With the fidata apps, there are a lot more you can do with the soundgenic. First thing, you can do is use it as a player. From the picture above, it looks quite typical kind of player. You can use the Apple airplay or normal bluetooth to playback from your mobile devices through the player even with Spotify Connect. Of course playback from the hard disk in the soundgenic is also one other option. How this is output will be through the USB port. The USB can be connected to external DAC of your hifi component. The USB port is also able to connect with external USB hard drive.

What is the important or attraction for me is the USB optical drive supported by the unit. In this case, I have a USB optical drive connected to the soundgenic. This means, it will now be a CD player too with the external drive. The feature I really wanted is the ability to ripped the CD into the hard disk without any software or control. Once you pop in the CD, the soundgenic will automatically ripped the song s from the CD into WAV or FLAC of your choice. The cover art and information is all automatically populated as well as the unit is also using your internet for this purpose. Once the files are ripped you can share it to any other devices within your network.

Overall this is all in one box for all the things pretty much needed for the need of digital audio. For the price and what it can offer in features, I will think is very hard to beat. This is all made in Japan comparing to many Chinese made products in the market that are on the same price range. The sound quality playback from the unit itself is also remarkable. I personally compare it with my Asus Tinker board with Volumio playback to be almost on par. This is definitely a worthy investment for a good quality audio playback and storage.