Seagate says Network Attached Storage and SMR don’t mix

Enlarge / Our set of eight 12TB IronWolf disks is free of SMR—and Seagate says every other IronWolf disk is, too.
Jim Salter

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Seagate Corporate Communications lead Greg Belloni reached out to us today in the wake of our earlier coverage of SMR disks showing up unannounced and in unexpected places.

Belloni confirmed that Seagate is using SMR technology in some desktop hard drives but stressed that the company is not “submarining” SMR disks into NAS (Network Attached Storage) channels.

> *Seagate confirms that we do not utilize Shingled Magnetic Recording technology (SMR) in any IronWolf or IronWolf Pro drives—purpose-built for NAS solutions. Seagate always recommends to use the right drive for the right application.*

We spoke to Belloni at some length on the topic. He did not object to allegations of SMR disks showing up unexpectedly in Seagate’s desktop channels but wanted to make very clear that Seagate has no SMR IronWolf or IronWolf Pro drives, and no plans to release any.

> *Seagate only produces NAS drives that are CMR. We do not have*

> *any SMR drives in our IronWolf and IronWolf Pro drives, which are NAS solutions. As Jason mentioned in his email to you, we don't recommend SMR for NAS […] I was just hoping that we could correct that, to make it a little more clear that Seagate is not producing NAS drives with SMR technology. […] Seagate will always recommend the correct drive technology for the right application.*

There is a bit of wiggle room, here. When we pushed Belloni on the issue of SMR drives in Seagate's desktop channel, he told us that Seagate didn't feel the need to "break it out" in that channel, since the company believes that SMR's low and bursty performance profile is appropriate for desktop use.

This sounds almost identical to Western Digital's justification for surprising NAS users with SMR drives in the Red line—a statement that the slower disks are "appropriate for the application." Belloni acknowledged the similarity but reiterated Seagate's position on IronWolf and NAS disks—and pointed out that both its Exos and Archive SMR disks have always been clearly marked as such.

Enlarge / This Amazon listing for Seagate shows the care with which the company has typically introduced its SMR disks.
We do not agree with Seagate that SMR drives are appropriate in desktop builds—or that it's okay to sneak them in there without the company's usual warnings about the technology's

performance profile.

With that said, we are happy to see Seagate make serious, on the record statements about keeping their entire NAS drive lineup SMR-free.

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