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Business Computing

ThumbDrive Smart: Just plug and play

By Reuben Lee, ZDNet Asia writer
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Making it easier than ever to transfer data from one PC to another is the latest product from Trek – the **ThumbDrive Smart**.

Unlike its predecessor – the ThumbDrive – which was released about a year ago, this new storage device can be used without any drivers. No more troublesome installation of drivers to detect the drive. All you need to do now is simply plug in the ThumbDrive and start transferring your files.



[ThumbDrive Smart](#)

Compatible operating systems

According to the specifications on the ThumbDrive Smart, it is supposed to be compatible on systems running Windows 98/98SE, Windows 2000, Windows Me, Windows XP as well as MacOS 8.6 and above.

However, when we tested it on several of our Windows 98SE systems, our pre-production test sample worked only after we installed the drivers. It has no problems running (without the need to install drivers) in Windows Me and Windows 2000 though.

We clarified this with an engineer from Trek and was told that the final product would work smoothly in Windows 98/98SE.

Overall user experience

Other than the slight incompatibility issue, the new Trek drive performed remarkably well. Like all other USB storage device, it is recognized as a removable drive in Windows Explorer once it is connected. Thus, transferring of files is just a matter of drag and drop (or copy and paste).

While it takes just about a minute to transfer approximately 16MB of data to the ThumbDrive Smart, we were impressed with the fact that you can actually playback MPEG movies or MP3 files off the drive directly. It even comes with a write protection lock to prevent important data from being accidentally erased.

It should be noted that the ThumbDrive uses SmartMedia flash memory technology in its design. Therefore, it can withstand shocks and vibrations to a reasonably high level without being damaged since it is not a mechanical drive and has no mechanical parts.

And because of its low power consumption, it can be powered using the USB port, without the need for an external power supply.

Pricing and availability



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Weighing merely 12 grams and measuring 64 by 18 by 8 mm, the tiny ThumbDrive Smart comes in various capacities from eight megabytes to 128MB. Capacities higher than 128MB (up till 512MB) will also be available soon after, but it is expected to be slightly longer and heavier in design. The price has yet to be confirmed but Trek has indicated that they would most likely be selling it at US\$1 per megabyte.

Also released at the same time is the ThumbDrive Touch, which is expected to cost a little more at US\$1.20 per megabyte. Using a fingerprint recognition access technology, this new storage device is aimed at those who want to store confidential data on the ThumbDrive.

According to Trek's R&D manager, the company is currently exploring ways to make use of the ThumbDrive in other products such as digital cameras and MP3 players. There are also plans to develop higher capacity and more affordable drives in the future.

Product: ThumbDrive Smart

Rating: ●●●●○

Price: Not confirmed yet

Availability in Asia/Pacific: Expected in Sept 2001

Requires: One free USB port; CD-ROM drive

Company: Trek 2000 International Ltd; www.thumbdrive.com



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