

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2397/stealth-mxp-mxi-security-usb>

Stealth MXP secure USB thumb drive

Will this keep your files safe?

by Davey Winder published on 14 June 2007

Regular readers will know that I suffer from ITS -OCD, IT Security Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. I have to encrypt my data three times before I leave the building and insist on changing my pass-phrase every hour.

OK, so it's not really that bad, but I do take IT security very seriously indeed. Which is probably why I don't just use the cheapest USB thumb drive on the market to store my important documents and data. Instead I wear a Netac OnlyDisk U220 around my neck in a kind of geek jewellery fashion.

Although, I suspect I should admit that the use of the word "fashion" is possibly not particularly appropriate in this case. Still, the U220 is tiny, not bad looking and really very secure indeed. If Meatloaf were reviewing the Stealth MXP he might well suggest that two out of three ain't bad, because it is also very secure indeed.

Which leads me to say, straight off the bat, that it isn't small (90 x 25 x 10mm) nor light (45g) and only the seriously fashion compromised would even consider it good looking enough to wear around their neck.

But beauty is not skin deep, and that is certainly the case as far as the Stealth MXP is concerned. Look beneath the bulky exterior and the secure muscle is revealed. For the technically minded amongst you this is the very first RSA SecureID -ready portable three-factor authentication device for secure remote access to hit the market. Now that I have got my breath back, count em:

1. Something you have - the device itself
2. Something you know - the access code
3. Something you are - your fingerprint

The physical bulk of the device can be explained away by the inclusion not only of that fingerprint



...cont.

reader which has to be allowed to recess back into the protective casing of the memory stick to prevent damage to the scanner surface itself, but also the fact that there is all the processing power required for the 256-bit AES encryption on-board as well.

Although the review unit we were provided with was a somewhat disappointing 512MB, pretty much obsolete in the real world these days, capacity does go right up to a much more usable 4GB. But it's that on-board processing that appeals to the security geek in me, as this means that the Stealth MXP is a "zero-footprint" device when connected to a remote host PC.

Insert into a PC and it provides all the secure functionality you would expect in a truly plug and play, not plug and pray manner as some devices offer, remove it or reboot that host PC and the stick is totally locked down, totally secure once more.

I suspect that the Stealth MXP will be of most interest to the business buyer, rather than the average consumer though, because of the ease of administration it offers with regard to security on the move. Simply put, the device is bound to a user by way of the hardware based biometrics and that password authentication, but the business IT administrator always has access if needed - unlike anyone who should steal or discover the device.

Setting it all up, while not rocket science, is certainly more complex than your average USB stick it has to be said. The consumer, I suspect, will be happier with something that is smaller, better looking and cheaper, even if it doesn't come with a snazzy fingerprint scanner built-in.

VERDICT

In this case security comes at a price, both in financial terms and fashion ones. It's big, bulky and expensive, but there's little out there that will secure your data quite so completely...

At a glance

What is it?

Secure USB Thumb Drive

Good

Hugely secure

Bad

Hugely expensive, hugely huge

Verdict

Would M give one of these thumb drives to James Bond?

Price £95

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10