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Iomega rev 35Gb/90Gb Removable Hard Disk Drive

by Stuart Miles published on 28 April 2004

When CDs and DVDs first arrived in 1982 and 1997 respectively, the general understanding from manufacturers was that tape was done with and we should all upgrade to the new, improved digital offering. After all, tape, whilst reliable, degrades over time. It's also slow and generally something that we should categorise as "so" last century. Now that we have relegated the cassette player and video to the kids' bedroom, Iomega are hoping that small businesses will do the same for their tape backups and adopt its removable hard drive based REV system. The concept is simple. Take a hard drive that holds 35Gb, remove the heads (placing them in the machine) so it can be thrown around the office and then imply that this is the next big portable and removable storage solution. In practice, luckily for Iomega the small desktop unit works. Connection is made through a USB2.0 cable and the spindle speed is 7,200RPM- meaning data transfer is fast and efficient. The diskettes- that cost £45 each- support the Windows UDF standard allowing you to simply drag and drop files on to them and the speed is almost as fast as a hard drive. The drag-and-drop functionality as well as the large hard drive-based format does provide its fair share of problems - mainly that it won't work across platforms. Iomega suggest that a Mac version will be launching with Firewire support rather than USB2.0 in September, but that you will not be able to share diskettes between the two. Harking back to a time when FireWire connections were Apple's exclusive domain is short-sighted when plenty of people will have FireWire ports on their PC motherboards or Audigy soundcards. The disks are the bit to get excited about if you are one that easily gets excited by storage solutions and they smaller than the current zip disk, but slightly bigger than the old Game Boy game cartridges. Because Iomega's chasing the backup sector rather than seeking to replace the Zip market just yet the software in the box is geared



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to backing up your PC. Iomega's own backup solution is included in the box - Automatic Backup Pro and a specialised version of Symantec's Norton Ghost designed specifically for the REV drive. Both packages are ample enough to provide backup support, however Iomega's own branded software will easily be enough for the small office worker looking to back up their work. Based on wizards you can opt to backup your data everytime the data changes to scheduling a backup every week without the need to remember when to do it. You can also have it save limited revisions of the files- ideal if you've got a bunch of staff who are delete mad.

VERDICT

At £280 the initial outlay is certainly more expensive than buying a 250Gb portable hard drive however it is clear that Iomega are pitching this to the tape market looking to save the data and then perhaps store it off site. It's a shame that the drives are incompatible between Mac and PC operating systems, but then if this system has been designed for back-up rather than replacing the Zip disk, perhaps those worries are unfounded. More interesting is that the technology has been road mapped up to 500Gb on one disk, hopefully keeping the same form factor, with Iomega again hoping to get there by 2009 (they plan to double the size of the disk capacity every 18 months- a sound strategy as long as the base drive can handle the larger capacities without a hitch). Getting companies to move away from the safety of the tape drive will be a hard task but this is a good solid product that might just get them to go digital, even if that sector gives it a long-term trial to ensure reliability.

At a glance

What is it?

Latest proprietary backup from Iomega

Good

Reasonable capacity; USB 2.0 Speed

Bad

Media Costs buy you a whole hard disk anyway; yet another cul-de-sac format from Iomega

Verdict

Remember Jaz Drives? As long as you're prepared for Iomega's semi-regular format dumping, go ahead- otherwise stick with internal drives

Price £279

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10