



### What is USB?



USB is the acronym for "Universal Serial Bus". USB has been around for a few years but is now quickly gaining popularity as an efficient way to connect a wide variety of devices to a computer. In the past printers connected to the parallel printer port, joysticks to the sound card game port, modem and mouse to a serial port. Other devices like scanners and CD-ROM drives connected to special adaptor cards which were installed in the computer. As users attached more devices the number of available connection ports became insufficient to meet the demand. Older ports also delivered relatively slow data transfer rates. With the drop in price of such devices as scanners and digital cameras the need for connection ports with high data transfer rates grew. In response USB was developed. USB has the ability to connect up to 127 devices each with a data transfer rate of up to 6 MB per second – enough devices and throughput to meet the needs of even the most demanding user. Devices are attached to the port via USB Cables with distinct 'A' and 'B' ends – making connection nearly foolproof. Many computers provide one or two USB Ports. Additional devices are connected by utilizing a relatively inexpensive USB Hub to expand the number of ports.

### The Need for Backup

As dependance on technology grows the importance of having reliable data backup increases. Many users do not appreciate the need for backup until after their first hard disk failure or serious virus infection when they discover that there was far more information stored on their computer than they had realized and that the time it takes to recreate it is significant. Many users are acquiring notebook computers as a result of decreasing prices and increased performance in addition or in place of traditional desktop systems. These portable computers are more likely to be damaged, lost or stolen along with whatever data they contain making ongoing, reliable data backup very important.

### USB Tape & Hard Disk Drives



USB Tape Backup and Hard Disk Drives offer some interesting alternatives to the traditional internal and external tape backup units which were often permanently attached to particular computers by proprietary connections. USB devices, by contrast, can easily be connected to almost any current generation computer via the USB Port. This enables a single USB Tape Drive to be used to back up multiple, non-networked desktop systems and notebook computers. This ease of connection makes these devices ideal for SOHO (Small Office Home Office) computer users who may have several computers; one at home, one in the office and a notebook computer. The relatively low cost of backup tapes makes it quite feasible to back up several computers simply by moving the USB Tape Backup Drive from computer to computer as desired. Current generation USB Tape Drives, like the Seagate Tapestor Travan Portable USB 20 GB pictured to the left, ship with everything required, including software, to back up 20 GB (compressed) of data onto a single tape. USB Hard Drives can also be used to provide a form of backup by copying or using the synchronization software included with Windows to copy data from a drive to the USB drive. USB Hard Drives, with capacities of up to 40 GB, provide an excellent method for carrying project files or data from one location to another while travelling, for example. Before leaving simply copy all desired data onto the USB Drive, take it with you and attach it to whatever computer is available at your destination – all data will have travelled with you and be retrievable at hard drive speed.

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