



## Special points of interest:

Thumb-sized USB Flash Drives provide an easy means of transferring information to remote computers.

They can also be used as a backup tool for selected folders.

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# Horizon Newsletter

## USB Flash Drives

### What is a USB Flash Drive?

It is a very small light-weight gadget, about the size of your thumb, that plugs into a USB port. It operates just like a hard disk drive. The main difference is there are no mechanical or moving parts. So the reliability of a flash drive is expected to be about 10 years. Some models come with a neck strap so that you can easily carry the flash drive with you.

Because the USB interface standard allows for hot-swapping, any USB device can be inserted or extracted while the computer is on.

### Prices

Prices can vary greatly mainly due to different features: capacity, security, encryption capabilities and some even have built in MP3 players. Prices can range from \$20 to \$370. A typical 256MB model with no extra features is around \$40-60.

### Size Availability

Current sizes are 32MB, 64MB, 128MB, 256MB, 512MB, 1GB, 2GB and 4GB.

### How to use

Plug it into the USB port of your computer or other USB-equipped device. When you open Windows Explorer the flash drive will appear just like a hard

drive, but with a new letter designation. You can then transfer files by dragging and dropping.

To transfer the files onto another computer, simply plug the flash drive into the computer that you want the files transferred to, open the folder that appears on your screen, and drag the desired files onto the computer.

### Supported Operating Systems

Flash drives use the USB protocol to interoperate with PCs or Macs and require the machine to have a USB port.

USB devices are supported by Windows Me, 2000, XP, Mac OS 9 and OS X and Linux 2.4.6 or later.

Some manufacturers offer drivers for Windows 98 SE or NT. Apple offers a mass storage class driver update for Mac OS 8.6.

Files can be shared on computers with different operating system versions if you are using Windows Millennium, 2000 or XP. If you have a Windows 98 PC, you will need a driver specific to your USB flash drive vendor. In remaining cases, USB flash drives will require installation of software on each computer accessing the information.

### Advantages Over CD-R or

### DVD-R

USB ports are much more common than CD and DVD burners, so your USB flash drive will work with more computers. Reading/writing to flash drives is much faster and simpler than burning a CD or DVD.

Flash drives act like hard drives so you can add and delete files as many times as you like. With CD-Rs and DVD-Rs, you can only add data once, and you can't remove data once it's burned onto the disc.

### Advantages Over an External Hard Drive

They are smaller than external hard drives and have no fragile moving parts that can break if dropped. They're more easily transported. They do not require time-consuming configuration required to connect an external hard drive.

### Main Reasons To Use

- Sharing information between computers
- Securing data
- Backup
- Models that include security features allow you to have a public and private partition. The public part is always accessible, while the private part is secured though password and/or encryption technology.

For more information on USB flash drives Visit the web site: [www.usbflashdrive.org](http://www.usbflashdrive.org)



These XP tips can help improve performance, change appearance and save disk space.

## Popular Manufacturers

- HP
  - IBM
  - Imation
  - Iomega
  - Kingston Technologies
  - Lexar Media
  - Linksys
  - Memorex
  - PNY Technologies
  - Sandisk
- SimpleTech Inc
  - Sony
  - Targus
  - TEAC
  - Verbatim
  - Viking InterWorks

Some manufacturers have assigned different names such as *JumpDrives, Pocket, Pen, Thumb*. These are all USB Flash Drives.

## Airport Security

USB flash drives should be airport security safe. However, it depends on the non-volatile memory used within the device. *You have to check the manufacturer's specifications.*

## Recovering Corrupted Data

Should you ever need to , you can purchase *Image Rescue 2* or *Image Recall 2* software to try to retrieve the data.

## Windows XP Tips

### Desktop Icons Not Displaying

If your desktop icons disappear you can retrieve them by...

- Right-click on the desktop
- Click Arrange Icons By
- Click Show Desktop Icons

*much like the classic desktop in Win98/Win2K.*

- Click Apply - *You'll see the effects almost immediately.*

Experiment until you've found the mix of speed and visual effects that works best for you.

### Improve Visual Performance

XP may have reserved a substantial amount of your CPU horsepower for things like animating various desktop elements, placing shadows under menus and cursors, and rounding the upper corners of open windows. In the aggregate, these visual effects can slow down screen-drawing operations significantly.

### To adjust Desktop animations and visual effects...

- Right click on My Computer
- Click Properties
- Select the Advanced Tab
- Click the Settings button in the Performance section.
- You can choose to activate/deactivate individual items or use the general

**Adjust for best performance and best appearance** buttons. *Selecting Best Performance makes your desktop look very*

### Color Depth

XP may have selected a **color depth** for your video system in excess of what you really need. This can also slow down screen operations. Higher settings do matter in photo/video editing and similar applications, but for most users who use Web browsing, E-mail, and word processing, the Medium setting is fully adequate, and it's faster. (*Note: If you have an ATI video card leave it at 32Bit*)

### To adjust the color depth...

- Right click the desktop
- Click Properties
- Select Settings Tab
- In the Color Quality field, change to Medium (16 bit)

### Improve Folder Views

You can easily change the folder view to something more restrained, space-efficient, and

useful.

### To adjust Folder view...

- Open My Documents
- Click on View
- If not selected, select Status Bar
- Right click on an empty spot in the toolbar (*The bar where the icons display*)
- Click Customize
- Choose any of the Available Toolbar Buttons you wish (*Useful is Undo, Delete, Cut, Copy, and Paste*)
- Click Add
- Click Close
- Click Tools
- Click Folder Options
- Select the View tab
- Check the boxes for...
  - Display the full path in address bar
  - Show hidden files and folders
- Uncheck box for ...
  - Hide extensions for known file types
- Click the **Apply to all folders** button at the top of the dialog when you

have the folder options set the way you desire. *This adjusts all windows opened by Explorer, so they'll inherit the visual choices you made for this one window.*

#### Customize the Taskbar

To allow you to resize various portions of the taskbar...

- Right click in empty spot in the Task Bar (bar next to the Start button)
- Uncheck Lock the Taskbar
- Click on Toolbars
- Click on Desktop
- Place the new Desktop toolbar far to the right on the Taskbar, over by the clock area.

If you want access to something on the Desktop that's covered with open windows, you can use this new Desktop toolbar as a shortcut to get to the item on the Desktop without having to close or move any open window.

#### Turn Off Automatic Updates

By default, XP wants to contact the Microsoft servers to auto-search for patches, downloads, and updates. This can be an annoyance if the auto-update cycle kicks in at an inopportune time.

It also wants to send Microsoft information about any crashes

you experience. This is a potential security hole, because the crash-reporting information includes a mini-dump of XP's memory contents; it can include snippets of open documents, passwords you've recently typed, and so on.

#### To turn off both behaviors...

- Right click on My Computer
- Click Properties
- Select Automatic Updates tab
- Select either Turn Off or Notify me.
- Select Advanced tab
- Click Error Reporting button
- Check Disable error reporting
- Check But notify me when critical errors occur

#### Trash Boxes

By default, both the Recycle Bin and Internet Explorer's Cache want to consume ridiculous amounts of your hard drive space.

#### To adjust Recycle Bin

- Right click Recycle Bin
- Click Properties
- On the Global tab Adjust the slider way to the left, so your using only a few hundred megs of space for trash

#### To adjust Internet Explorer

- Open Internet Explorer
- Select Tools
- Select Internet Options
- Under Temporary Internet Files, click the Settings button
- Select a reasonable size for this cache area. *If you have a fast connection, 5-10MB is adequate; 25MB or so is usually enough with a slower dial-up connection.*

#### System Restore

System Restore is an incredible space hog. It might be worth it if System Restore were a truly complete and foolproof form of backup, but it's not. At best, System Restore can and will get the core operating system running again after a bad crash, but it doesn't return all files to the pre-trouble state, and it can't remove all traces of a program that went bad. As a result, System Restore's usefulness is limited, and so should be its appetite for disk space. We recommend turning it off.

- Right click on My Computer
- Select Properties
- Select the System Restore tab
- Check Turn off System Restore



**Error Reporting** sends Microsoft information about any crashes you experience. This is a **potential security hole**, because the crash-reporting information includes a mini-dump of XP's memory contents. It can include snippets of open documents and passwords you've recently typed.



## XP Commands that can be entered from Run

**Command** or **cmd** — opens DOS window  
**control** - opens your control panel  
**clipbrd** - Opens your clipboard viewer  
**wordpad** - Opens a handy text editor  
**compmgmt.msc** - Computer management  
**devmgmt.msc** - Device manager  
**diskmgmt.msc** - Disk management  
**dfrg.msc** - Disk defrag

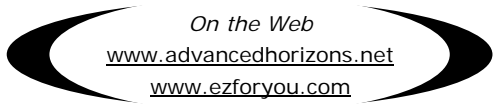
**eventvwr.msc** - Event viewer  
**fsmgmt.msc** - Shared folders  
**gpedit.msc** - Group policies  
**lusrmgr.msc** - Local users and groups  
**perfmon.msc** - Performance monitor  
**rsop.msc** - Resultant set of policies  
**secpol.msc** - Local security settings  
**services.msc** - Services



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## And Now for Some Humor

A French language instructor was explaining to a class that nouns, unlike their English counterparts, are grammatically designated as masculine or feminine. One student asked, "What gender is computer?" The word wasn't in her French dictionary. The class was split into two groups by gender and asked to decide whether "computer" should be a masculine or feminine noun.



The men's group decided that computers should definitely be of the feminine gender ("la computer"), because:

- No one but their creator understands their internal logic
- The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else
- Even the smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for possible later retrieval
- As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your pay check on accessories for it

The women's group, however, concluded that computers should be masculine ("le computer"), because:

- In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on
- They have a lot of data but they are still clueless
- They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem
- As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you'd waited a little longer, you could have gotten a better model

*Thanks to Kent Pierce for providing this tidbit.*