



(128MB,256MB,512MB,1GB,2GB,4GB)

Despite the different brands and names you've heard for USB flash drives – JumpDrives™, Pocket drives™, Pen drives™, and Thumb drives™ – they all pretty much operate the same way. The difference is mostly in price, capacity, design, functions and features (for example, some have built-in MP3 players). What's really important, though, is what they share: They're all pluggable, portable, and powerful!

Q. What is a USB Flash Drive?

A. A USB flash drive is a compact USB flash memory drive that acts like a portable hard drive, letting you store and transport your most precious computer data. They hold incredibly large amounts of information and are small enough -- about the size of a pack of gum -- to slip easily into your pocket, conveniently around your neck like a necklace, or on your keychain.

Q. How do I use a USB Flash Drive?

A. Just plug your USB flash drive into the USB port of your computer or other USB-equipped device and drag the files you want to take with you into the folder that appears on your screen. Your files are instantly transferred to your USB flash drive. To transfer the items on your USB flash drive onto another computer, simply plug your USB 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's desktop.

Q. Will my USB Flash Drive work with any computer?

A. USB flash drives are using the USB protocol to interoperate with PCs (Macs too!) and devices with a USB port. Typically USB Flash Drives use mass storage class drivers that are incorporated in Windows Me, Windows 2000 and Windows XP or later as well as Mac OS 9 and Mac OS X or later as well as Linux 2.4.6 or later. Some manufacturers offer drivers for Windows 98 SE or Windows NT. Apple offers a mass storage class driver update for Mac OS 8.6. For more information, please consult with the manufacturer of the USB Flash Drive.

Q. How much data can a USB Flash Drive hold?

A. USB flash drives are currently available with up to 4 GB storage capacity, and are available in a variety of storage sizes for different needs. For reference, a 2 GB USB flash drive can hold about 250 songs in MP3 format.

Q. What are the advantages of using a USB Flash Drive instead of a CD-R or DVD-R?

A. USB ports are much more common than CD and especially DVD burners, so your USB flash drive will work with more computers than a CD-R or DVD-R. Also, the process of uploading files from your computer to a USB flash drive is much faster and simpler than burning a CD or DVD.

Additionally, USB flash drives act like portable hard drives to which 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.

In general, USB flash drives use mass storage class drivers, therefore any system that supports mass storage class drivers should be able to access the content from the USB flash drive – including music files!

Q. What are the advantages of using a USB Flash Drive instead of a Floppy Disc?

A. A standard floppy disc can hold 1.44 MB, which is many times less storage space than a USB flash drive.

Q. What are the advantages of using a USB Flash Drive instead of an External Hard Drive?

A. At the size of a pack of gum, USB flash drives are far smaller than external hard drives, and with no fragile moving parts that can break if dropped, they're more easily transported. USB flash drives also do not require the time-consuming configuration required to connect an external hard drive to your computer.

Q: Who are USB Flash Drives for?

A. USB flash drives are for everyone! Power users will appreciate the power and portability that USB flash drives provide, while tech novices will love how easily and intuitively USB flash drives allow you to share files. If you can turn on a computer and open a document, you can operate a USB flash drive!

Q. Do I need a USB Flash Drive?

A. If you often find yourself in need of a way to share information between computers, or want to secure your most precious computer data, USB flash drives are for you. With USB flash drives you can transport a PowerPoint file to your client's office for presentation, work on documents from home and then bring them back with you to work in the morning, bring thousands of digital photos across the country to share with your relatives, and much more.

Q. Are there many manufactures of these kinds of products? If so, who are they?

A. USB flash drives are manufactured and sold by a number of different companies.

Q: How much do USB Flash Drives cost?

A. Prices vary greatly, based on the manufacturer and the size of the drive.

Q. How can I protect my computer from possible virus corruption when using a USB flash drive?

A. In general, the best way to protect your computer against virus attacks is through various security methods. These may include an Internet fire wall, a virus scanner and other tools screening incoming files for viruses. In the case of USB flash drives, you might want to consider running a virus scan on the contents of the drive before accessing any files.

Q. Where can I find a driver to download so I can use a USB flash drive on my older computer?

A. Most USB flash drives use mass storage class drivers. These are included in Windows ME, Windows 2000 and Windows XP. In order to operate under Windows 98 SE, a USB flash drive typically requires a driver that you can usually obtain from the manufacturer of the USB flash drive, through their customer service support number or web site.

Q. Can I use a USB flash drive as a back-up for significant files?

A. USB flash drives have many usage models. One of them is to function as a backup of your important files.

Q. Where can I find technical specifications on USB flash drives?

A. In general, USB flash drives work like USB hard disks, using mass storage class drivers. The technical specification for mass storage class devices can be obtained from www.usb.org. Typically, manufacturers provide specifications for their specific products. Please check with your USB flash drive manufacturer for further information.

Q. What is the difference between USB flash drives and USB Micro Drives?

A. The term "USB flash drive" is a generic phrase used to describe of these products without specifying a particular manufacturer. USB flash drives are sold by many different companies under a variety of different proprietary product names. The term "USB flash drive" is used in the same manner that the term "DVD" and "CD-RW" are used; to describe the technology in generic terms.

It is likely that other names you have heard used to describe these products are actually proprietary product names intended to describe a specific USB flash drive model made by a specific company.

Q. Are there secure USB flash drives?

A. Secure USB flash drives are offered by multiple vendors with multiple features and functions. Typically, they allow the user to have a public and private partition or drive. The public part is always accessible, while the private part is secured through password and/or encryption technology.

Q. A USB flash drive with important data appears to have "fried." What are your recommendations for recovering the data?

A. Whenever you experience data loss due to accidental erase or corruption immediately STOP using the USB flash drive. Try to retrieve the data through recovery software, such as Image Rescue 2 or Image Recall 2, which are available at computer retail stores.

Q. Are USB flash drives intended to be hot-swappable (i.e. you can plug one in, or remove it, with the computer already on)?

A. The USB interface standard was created with the hot-swappable feature in mind. Any USB device can be inserted or extracted while the computer is on. This applies to USB flash drives as well. See also www.usb.org.

Q: Is it possible to transfer data to and from computers running different operating systems?

A: Yes it is possible. As the majority of drives supported are mass storage class drivers, specifically computers using Windows Millennium 2000 or Windows XP, you can easily share files and data to and from your computers.

However, if you are using Windows 98, you will need a driver specific to your USB flash drive vendor.

In remaining cases, USB flash drives that necessitate installation of software will need to be installed on each computer accessing the information.

Q: Can I store and transfer music files with my USB flash drive?

A: In general, USB flash drives use mass storage class drivers, therefore any system that supports mass storage class drivers should be able to access the content from the USB flash drive – including music files!

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This excerpt came from <http://www.usbflashdrive.org>.