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ReadyNetGo ... News

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TIP OF THE MONTH

Not all ports/buses are created equal!

There are many hardware devices available for PCs and laptops nowadays. There are also many different ways in which you can attach those devices. Below is a rundown of the available ports/buses and the speed at which they transfer data. Keep this information in mind when purchasing a new computer or hardware device especially if speed is one of the most important features.

Serial	115 kbps
Enhanced Serial	460 kbps
Parallel	150 kbps
USB 1.1	12 mbps
USB 2.0	480 mbps
IEEE 1394	400 mbps
IEEE 1394b (copper cables)	800 mbps (100 MBps)
IEEE 1394b (fiber optic cables)	3.2 Gbps
SCSI	4 -160 Mbps (SCSI 1 – SCSI 3)

*Note: there are 10 SCSI variations. Make sure you match the SCSI controller card and connector to your device.

Need Storage?

Check Out These Four Handy Drives

The day of the floppy has finally seen its end! With increasing file sizes, 1.44 MB just isn't adequate for today's storage needs. The demand is on the increase for efficient and long lasting means for storage and thankfully there are many options on the market. We will discuss four options that can be used for small to medium backups, transferring of files, and archiving data. They are: CD-RW, DVD± RW, USB flash drives, and hard drives.

CD-RW drives are a great addition to any computer. From backing up data to downloading music and images, you can capture up to 650 MB on one disc; a far cry from the floppy (Note: Although zip disks can now hold 750 MB, their popularity is waning and is not backwards compatible with older 100 MB and 250 MB drives). CD-Rs and CD-RWs will be around for awhile but their impact will be slowed by the next contender.

DVD drives have 5 different formats: DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD+RW, DVD-RAM. The single R denotes write once, the RW means you can write many times (similar to CDs). The one main difference is that some drives can only read specific formats and some media will only work in certain drives. Although the standards are leading towards the +R/RW camp, many manufacturers are making drives compatible with both formats.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.onebag.com - Going on a trip?? Get advice on packing light - take only one bag.
2. www.longwoodgardens.com - This former Dupont estate is located near Kennett Square - plan a trip for the holidays.
3. medlineplus.gov - links for medical information including an encyclopedia, dictionary and current medical news.

Storage Options

To find past newsletter issues, go to: www.readynetgo.net/newsletter/

DVD±R/RW disks can hold up to 4.7 GB. As with CDs, the ±R disks work best with burning videos and audio. The ±RW works best with data. DVD-RAM discs can hold 9.4GB which lends itself nicely to storing data but since DVD-RAM discs are not compatible with most DVD-ROM drives, burning your videos won't work with this format.

Some additional notes: DVD+RW drives tend to be faster than -RW drives; DVD drives can burn CDs as well as DVDs; each DVD disk can hold the equivalent of 7 CD-R/RW disks, up to 2 hours of digital video, or thousands of images.

USB Flash Drives

One of the coolest gadgets on the market right now -- USB flash drives are the perfect replacement for the floppy! They are small (will easily fit in the palm of your hand), are compatible with most computers and Operating Systems, and range in storage capacity from 32 MB to over 2 GB. The higher capacity drives are still extremely expensive (over \$300 for a 1 GB drive compared to about \$30 for a 32 MB drive) but they give you incredible flexibility if you constantly transfer files between non-networked computers or need to temporarily back-up important files.

There are a wide variety of styles, colors and shapes to choose from so have fun and get one that fits your personality. You can't beat the convenience and ease of use of these handy portable drives!

Quick tip: Since there are two USB standards right now - USB 1.1 and USB 2.0 - opt for a smaller size drive if you have a USB 1.1 port (less than 128 MB). USB 2.0 is well suited for transferring larger quantities of data. If you opt for the larger size drive and it turns out you use it often, you can always upgrade your USB 1.1 port to 2.0.

External Hard Drives

External hard drives are great for backups. Storage capacity ranges from 40 GB to over 200 GB and normally connect via Firewire or USB 2.0 ports. For laptop users, carrying an external hard drive with their most recent backup is nearly essential these days. Hard drives only have a lifespan of 3-5 years with normal usage, so unless you have a new computer or laptop, the likelihood that you will experience a hard drive failure will increase. Having an external hard drive will allow you to plug in and continue working without a glitch.

For desktop users, external hard drives are a convenient way of backing up important files that you use regularly. Unlike tape drives, in which you have to search through the entire tape to find the information you need, an external hard drive will show up as a drive in Windows Explorer. You can find files as quickly as reading the files on the internal drive.

Another bonus: While tape is traditionally used for off-site storage, if you need to transport gigabytes of data, you will have to make sure that there is a compatible tape drive at the other end for you to read the tape. As long as the computer on the receiving end has a USB or Firewire port, you can transport gigabytes of data with an external hard drive easily.