

Tech Corner Reviews

Backup hardware and software Are you protecting your work?

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This column reviews hardware and software products available to the fraud examiner. Most reviewed items have a street price of less than \$300 and in many instances, there will be reviews of software applications which are free.

As I write this column, I'm participating in the execution of an Anton Pillar order to enter a company's premises, search its records, acquire image copies of its computer drives, and seize its inventory.¹

This order isn't easily obtained and clearly represents a powerful tool for the victim of a theft by another - primarily of intellectual property. We successfully obtained the order as a result of several months of investigative work performed by a private investigation company hired by my client.

The search-and-seizure team had arranged to meet in a local breakfast restaurant about one mile from the suspect location at 9 a.m. to confirm that all the legal documentation was in order and to review last-minute planning.

The last to arrive was the lawyer with the signed court orders. As he entered, he advised the private investigator that he noticed a truck in the parking lot with a broken window. Sure enough, it belonged to the private investigator. Gone were camera equipment and his notebook computer bag that also held his Blackberry and wallet. Aside from the aggravation, everything was replaceable except the data on his notebook computer. It contained his entire file on the current case along with a tremendous amount of additional important information and he didn't have a backup.

There's no better prevention against loss of data whether it be intentional, accidental, theft, or corruption, than to have a reliable backup strategy. Software programs normally don't need to be backed up - most are available for re-installation. But data files should be backed up daily. Many believe that copying relevant files on CDs or DVDs to be sufficient. This will work if the backup media is large enough to accommodate everything you need and the backup procedure is easy, convenient, and timely. However, many files now contain graphics and other detailed content, which require storage on several CDs. The process becomes complicated.

Iomega Rev3 USB

The best low-budget solution I've found - the Iomega Rev 3 USB - works both on networks and notebooks, is portable, has high capacity, will operate unattended, and is easy to use.

With an average time to locate data on the tape media of 13 milliseconds and data-transfer rates of up to 25MB per second, the Iomega Rev drive stays in the speed ballpark with heavy-hitting external hard drives. But because it uses removable media, the Rev drive is much more versatile for tasks such as moving large files between PCs and creating backups for offsite safekeeping.

Each Rev cartridge stores a whopping 35GB or quite a bit more if you use compression. Iomega promises up to 90GB per cartridge but I've never achieved a compression ratio high enough to indicate that this is possible. Nevertheless, I've successfully backed up my entire notebook, overnight and unattended, as well as all of our data files from the office server - an amount in excess of 35GB.

My last backup was 38 GB, compressed to 22GB and was completed in a little more than five hours.

Setup and ease of use

The lomega Rev measures 6.15 inches long, 4.33 inches wide, and 1.42 inches deep, and weighs 13 ounces - smaller than most external tape and hard drives and suitable for briefcase travel. Its only control is an eject button that also lights up to indicate drive access.

Because it's an external USB 2.0 drive, the Rev is reasonably plug-and-play. I followed the seven-step procedure outlined in lomega's quick-start guide, and in just a few minutes I had installed the drivers and software, plugged in the drive, and quickly found a new drive letter in Windows Explorer.

The Rev 3 comes bundled with lomega's automatic backup pro software. It's easy to install, set up, and runs automatically with "set-it and forget-it" file backups, full system backup, and fast disaster recovery. Automatic backup pro is an easy and effective backup solution that lets you select individual files and/or folders for archiving. The software can make backups whenever the data changes, at regular intervals throughout the day, on selected days, or at your discretion. The software lets you choose between uncompressed backups that are directly accessible from Windows or compressed, password-protected (optional) backups that require automatic backup pro for restore.

Pricing on the Rev 3 is like any other hardware peripheral - in the \$350 range.

BackUp MyPC 6.0

BackUp MyPC from Stompsoft is the perfect automated and easy data protection and disaster recovery program for single computers or small home networks. The new user interface, dual layer support, and upgraded disaster recovery make this a solid choice for your complete backup needs! Featuring award-winning, state-of-the-art technology and a straightforward, intuitive interface, this powerful software makes it easy to prevent data disasters and restore your files in the event of a system crash. Plus, full password protection means you're always in control.

Backup My PC provides the essential backup and restore functions in an elegant and simple package. Once installed, Wizards available from the Tools menu help you with backup and restore tasks. For example, the Backup Wizard allows you to choose between a full backup or an incremental backup, which is limited to new and changed files. It suggests to compare files with the original and compress during backup to save space. Backup My PC recognized the Rev 3 instantly and took advantage of the compression capability without any problems. (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1

I was able to schedule backups to allow them to run unattended every night and in the morning; a detailed or summarized log report was available to tell me how the backup worked. A simple graphical display shows progress during the backup. (See Figure 2.)



Figure 2

Backup My PC also has options to backup the registry.

The wide range of supported peripherals and operating systems, compression and unattended operation makes it worth a close look. Priced at \$59.95, this is a worthwhile purchase.

Protect against intruders

As fraud examiners, we're always recording sensitive and confidential information on our computers. At a point in time, you will no longer need this information from a particular case but you certainly don't want anyone else to have it.

You may think you're protected as long as you've deleted files, reformatted a disk, or deleted a partition. However, your data remains on the drive and many programs can easily recover it.

Anytime you place your computer into the hands of others without removing and securely overwriting your data, your personal information is at risk of being exposed.

A disk-wiping program must:

- completely and permanently erase 100 percent of all selected data on your hard drive;
- securely delete your files and free space so they can never be recovered; and
- completely remove sensitive files and their contents from your disk drive.

File Shredder

One product which I have tested is File Shredder from Stompsoft. Thanks to File Shredder, files and folders from your system can be removed without the possibility of data recovery by identity thieves and snoops. (See Figure 3.)



Figure 3

Users can clear up space on their hard drives and can be confident that their deleted data can never be restored and used against them. File Shredder even meets U.S. Department of Defense standards! Easy customization options and a user-friendly interface make File Shredder a perfect choice for privacy protection. Priced at only \$29.95 this is an invaluable tool in the fraud examiner's toolbox.

1 An Anton Pillar Order is a Canadian order allowing for an applicant (without notice to a respondent) to enter the respondent's premises and inspect or seize documents or other items. The issuance of an Anton Pillar Order has been deemed necessary by a Court of Law to demonstrate through substantial evidence that this legally binding order is both vital and necessary to preserve evidence.

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