

WD Takes Notebook Drives to 250 Gbytes

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Western Digital said Monday that it has begun shipping a 250-Gbyte version of its Scorpio 2.5-inch disk drive, pushing notebook PC storage capacities ever higher.

Available in capacities ranging from 40 to 250 Gbytes, the new WD drives feature a pair of new technologies, which the company calls "WhisperDrive" and "ShockGuard". Prices on the new 250-Gbyte drives will be about \$199, available from WD's online store.

Although the company touted the 250-GB Scorpio as the highest-capacity hard disk drive to date, it will have to compete with the Fujitsu MHY2BH, a similar 2.5-inch, 250-Gbyte drive whose shipments began last week, according to the company.

Like virtually all new hard disk drives, the WD Scorpio drives employ perpendicular recording, a technique to maximize the drive's capacity by aligning the magnetic grains vertically, rather than along the surface of the disk platter.

In addition, the new drives use a technique called "WhisperDrive," which adjusts the drive's controller to minimize head movement when seeking data. A complementary technology, "Intelliseek," forces the drive to wait until it spins up before it seeks data, in a "just in time" procedure that also will stifle noise, the company said.

By 2011, shipments of mobile 2.5-inch hard drives will more than double 2006 shipment volumes, according to IDC.

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