Gadgets: Tiny drives, but big in capacity

September 9 2009, By Gregg Ellman

Verbatim Americas, LLC, continues to produce innovative storage devices for users on the go. The latest include additions to their portable line of USB drives.

The TUFF-N-TINY drive comes in capacities of 4GB ($29.99) in emerald green and 8GB ($49.99) in royal purple to work on both Mac and Windows systems. While the capacities are nice and healthy, their size it what's amazing.

Working the word Tiny into the name was an obvious choice, since they actually measure about 1 x .5-inch and have the thickness of a coin.

Being that small, they obviously can be easily lost, but Verbatim has taken precautions to prevent this. Each drive comes with a key ring lanyard, which can be clipped to most anything.

The drives are made with a technology that seals the unit, making it resistant to dust, water and static discharges.

In addition to storing documents, Verbatim states that the 8GB drive can store nearly eight hours of MPEG-1 video, about 2,000 hours of MP3 music, about 4,000 300dpi color photos or 8GBs anything combined.

Windows' users can take advantage of a security feature that includes password protection on the drive. It also works with Windows Vista ReadyBoost to become a dual-purpose device while speeding up system performance

Another well thought-out product from Verbatim is the TUFF-CLIP USB drive. This is more my style, a physically bigger drive in a plastic enclosure with a built-in carabineer clip.

The drive measures 2.9-by-.45-by-.90-inches and weighs less than 2 ounces. The clip allows it to be attached to any belt loop, backpack strap or lanyard.

It's available in capacities of 4GB ($29.99) in turquoise and 8GB ($49.99) in black.

An attractive feature has the connection to the USB port exposed when in use, but protected with a retractable slider when not in use. This prevents the user from losing any protective caps since the whole thing is always one piece.

The password security software, which comes with the Tiny series drive, is included in the Tuff series along with certification to work with Windows Vista ReadyBoost. For storage purposes it will also work perfect with Mac systems.

Details: Verbatim.com

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Datacolor, a producer of color management solutions for photographers, graphic artists and other creative types, has several new products to help users get the color right.

The Spyder3Express ($89) monitor calibration system helps consumers set their computer monitors in a simple and easy manner, with no knowledge of calibrating necessary.

Some might wonder why calibration is needed but once you see how the results are better than pre-calibration, you will be sold. This helps ensure the color on the monitor and in prints are the same as the colors seen before the images were made.

When using the device, consumers will consistently get accuracy and reliability. Users will love the intuitive interface, which is used in a few simple steps on both Mac and PC systems.

With the system, users also get unlimited license seats to calibrate as many monitors as needed without worrying about the operating systems or the quantity. In the past monitor calibration was not only expensive, but also difficult. The Spyder3Express puts that in the past and simplicity in the present.

The other new product is a more complete solution, the Spyder3Studio SR ($599) calibration system.

This system ensures users get the proper color management at three primary points during the photographic process of creating, viewing, and sharing photographs. This includes the image capture, digital desktop image manipulation, and print output.

Spyder3Studio includes the SpyderCube RAW calibration device, which eliminates the need for traditional 18 percent gray cards. Users also get the Spyder3Elite monitor calibration tool and the new Spyder3Print SR (strip reader) to assist in creating ICC printer profiles.

The Spyder3Print SR will produce the needed results with any combination of inks, paper, and printer. Company tests showed it to excel in producing outstanding fine-art quality black-and-white prints.

"Datacolor's Spyder3Studio SR is the most comprehensive color

management system photographers and photo enthusiasts can have to ensure perfect calibration throughout the imaging process," says Christoph Gamper, Vice President, Consumer Business Unit, Datacolor said in a recent email.

"It is an extremely attractive package, both in design and price point and was created by photographers for photographers to address their specific needs with specific solutions," Gamper added.

Details: datacolor.com

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FINALLY! That's what I thought when I first heard about the new Other World Computing (OWC) USB 2.0 Display Adapter.

With the adapter, MAC and PC users can add an additional display with ease. Additionally, there will be no need for additional AC since it's bus powered.

It seemed that adding additional monitors were a chore with some computers, but anymore. Users simply utilize an unused USB 2.0 port without the work and costs of installing a video card in a computer.

Productivity for most users will increase since you can keep multiple windows open at the same time, doubling the viewing space (assuming your second display is the same size as the first).

For example, if you have one display dedicated to photos being worked in Adobe Photoshop, the second monitor can house the screens for mail programs and messenger applications.

When I got my unit to test, I followed the press release's simple

instructions to just plug the device into the USB port, attach the display adapter and then load the included driver software. Nothing to it and my square footage of viewing space increased in just minutes.

The OWC USB 2.0 Display Adapter also connects to HDMI, DVI and VGA equipped displays.

The OWC USB 2.0 Display Adapter is packaged with everything you need except the extra monitor. Included is a four-foot USB cable, software and user guide along with adapters for USB to DVI, DVI to VGA and DVI to HDMI.

Details: macsales.com

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