

What is a Flash Drive



Definition: A flash drive is a small, ultra-portable storage device which, unlike a hard drive or optical drive, has no moving parts.

Most flash drives connect to the PC via a built-in USB port. Storage capacity ranges from as small as 16MB to as much as 64GB.

Flash drives can be written and rewritten to an almost unlimited number of times, much like a standard hard drive.

Flash drives have essentially replaced floppy drives and larger flash drives are often better options for regular data storage than even optical drives.

Also Known As: USB drive, pen drive, thumb drive, jump drive, solid state drive

Cool Things You Can Do With Your USB Flash Drive



Manage Data

- Even if all you use your flash drive for is to move data around, the [Microsoft USB Flash Drive Manager](#) will help you do it more efficiently. You can copy files to and from your drive, backup and restore an entire flash drive to and from your hard disk, change the drive label, and even launch Drive Manager automatically when you plug in the drive.

Run Applications

- Even without a [U3 smart drive](#), you can run programs directly from your USB drive. [PortableApps.com](#) has free, open source software that lets you run ‘portable’ apps without installing software to your PC. When you use someone else’s computer, you can continue to use your software just as if it was on your own computer – without installing anything on your friend’s computer.

Run Applications

- This benefit isn't limited to USB drives. You can run the programs from portable hard drives and even MP3 players that show up as a separate drive on your computer.
- Portable apps are optimized for use on removable drives and don't interfere with software installed on the PC.
- Because your personal data is kept on your flash drive you have increased security. When you unplug the device, none of your personal data is left behind.

Run Applications

- PortableApps.com has an entire [collection](#) of programs you can install with a single download. These include OpenOffice (word processing, spreadsheet, presentations, database and drawing), Firefox, Thunderbird (email), Sunbird (calendar and tasks), ClamWin (antivirus), Pidgin (instant messaging), Sumatra PDF reader, KeePass Password Safe, and CoolPlayer+ (audio player). You also get a couple games. You may not get the latest version of the 'full' versions, but the portable apps are definitely functional and will let you work even if you don't have access to your own computer.

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Lock Your PC

- Have you ever seen a movie where a person in some secret government agency puts a card into a PC to use it? [Predator](#) is a free program that lets you do that with your USB drive. When you take the drive out of your computer, the screen darkens and your keyboard and mouse are frozen. Plug it back in and everything goes back to normal. While the USB flash drive is connected to your computer, everything works as it normally would. Once you remove the USB flash drive, your computer is locked down -- the keyboard and mouse are disabled and the screen darkens. To unlock your computer, you just plug in the USB flash drive and the computer will be unlocked and you can begin using it.

Lock Your PC

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Preferences' dialog box for the Windows XP Lock utility. The dialog is titled 'Preferences' and has a close button (X) in the top right corner. It is divided into four sections: 'Settings', 'Alarm Notifications', 'Change Password', and 'USB Key Drive'. In the 'Settings' section, the 'Language' is set to 'English - en', 'Interval (s)' is 60, 'Opacity (%)' is 90, and 'Startup mode' is 'AutoStart with Windows'. The 'Detection' section has checkboxes for 'Fast' and 'Floppies', both of which are unchecked. The 'Alarm Notifications' section has a 'Play sound file' field with a browse button (...), a 'Beep' checkbox (unchecked) for 'System speaker', and a 'Count' field set to 0 (0=mute). The 'Change Password' section has two empty text boxes for 'Current Password' and 'New Password'. The 'USB Key Drive' section has a 'Create key on Drive' dropdown set to 'D:' and a 'Create Key' button. On the right side of the dialog, there are 'Ok' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Preferences

Settings

Language: English - en

Interval (s): 60

Opacity (%): 90

Startup mode: AutoStart with Windows

Detection: Fast
 Floppies

Alarm Notifications

Play sound file: []

Beep: System speaker

Count: 0 (0=mute)

Change Password

Current Password: []

New Password: []

USB Key Drive

Create key on Drive: D: [] Create Key

Ok Cancel

Connect to a Wireless Network

- Both Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7 let you save wireless network configuration information to your flash drive. When you set up a new computer, connecting it to your network is then a snap. Recently when I visited my daughter and her family in Utah, I connected to their home wireless network in a few seconds with the configuration information saved on a flash card from a camera.

Create a Password Reset Disk

- If you don't use passwords on your computer, skip this. But if you use a 'strong' password, you may worry that after taking a vacation or other long trip (without your computer) you will have forgotten the password to log on to your computer. Both XP, Vista and Windows 7 let you create a backup of those passwords. Vista lets you save the information on a flash drive. If your computer is part of a domain network, this technique won't work.

Boost Vista Performance

- If your flash drive is ReadyBoost capable, you can use it as additional memory cache. Because flash drives don't have moving parts, they can be faster than your hard drive.

Run (or Test) a Website

- With the free Server2Go software, you can run a Web server that supports Apache, PHP, MySQL, and Perl right from a USB flash drive. Why would you want to do that? Imagine demoing a site live in a meeting – without having to worry about internet connections. Or working on a site when you're on a plane (without having to pay for spotty and unreliable access at 35,000 feet), sitting in a campground (after, of course, the rest of your family has gone to sleep), etc.

Password Protect Data on Your Drive

- Worried that others will get sensitive or confidential data if you lose your USB drive? There are free programs that let you create a secret partition on the drive and then password-protect/encrypt that partition. Check out [Rohos](#).

Boot an Operating System

- Use your flash drive to boot [Windows](#) or Linux. But expect to have an interesting adventure unless you are a real techno whiz.

Store Your MP3 Files

- Put your MP3 files on your flash drive and you can use your computer to play your files without having to worry about running down the battery on your MP3 player. Of course, I wouldn't plan to go jogging if you have to carry your laptop with you...

Flash Drive Tutorial

What is a USB Flash Drive?

A Flash Drive is a type of portable USB drive that stores and transfers data located on your computer working similar to floppies in that information can be stored and written on them. This device enables you to read, write, copy, delete and move data from USB flash drives to your hard disk drive and back again. They do not require any type of software installation- all that is required is a USB port with which all modern computers are equipped! (Flash drives are also referred to as jump drives, thumb drives, pin drives and USB drives.)

What is the difference between floppies and flash drives?

FLOPPY DISK	FLASH DRIVE
Larger in size	More portable (about the size of your thumb)
Smaller storage space	Larger storage space (see chart below for comparison)
Slow to write information	Quickly transfers files

CAPACITY OF DRIVE	DATA SIZE OF FLOPPY DISKS	DIGITAL PHOTO CAPACITY <small>(Varies depending on photo size)</small>
64 MB	= 44 floppies	+50 photos
128 MB	= 88 floppies	+100 photos
256 MB	= 176 floppies	+200 photos
512 MB	= 352 floppies	+400 photos

Flash Drive Tutorial

How do I use my Flash Drive?



Flash Drive Tutorial

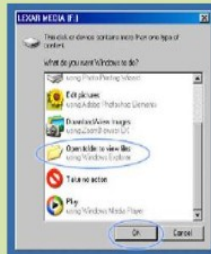
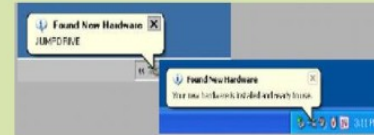


1.) Insert Flash Drive into the USB Port of your computer.

-Where is my USB port? It is usually found in newer model computers in a hidden compartment on the front of the hard drive and in the back of the hard drive on older computers. The port for laptops is found on the side or back of the computer.

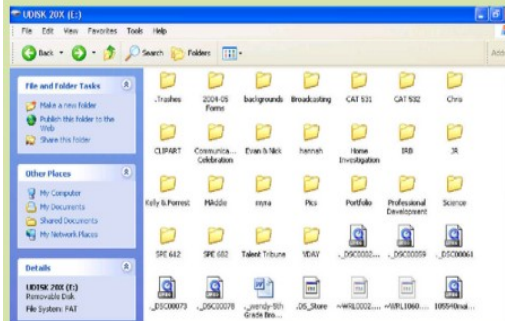
2.) Wait for the hardware to automatically install on your computer.

After the hardware is installed, it is ready to use!



3.) In most cases, an Options Window will automatically open. Select "Open folder to view files" Click "OK."

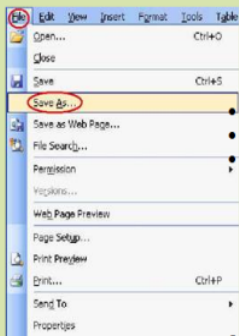
4.) After selecting the option to open the folder, you will see what files are within your flash drive.



5.) Select the file that you would like to open

Flash Drive Tutorial

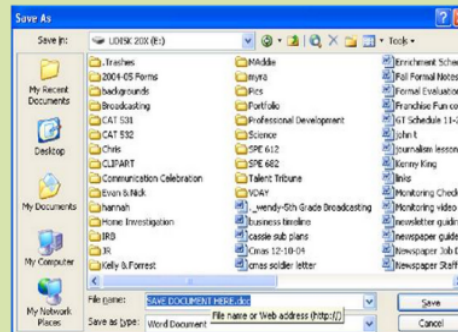
How do I save new information on my USB Flash Drive?



1.) Saving files on a Flash Drive is similar to saving files on a floppy disk

For example:
• Open Microsoft Word
• Select "File"
• Select "Save As"

2.) Select the Flash Drive from the drop down menu (sometimes titled "Removable Disk" or "Unknown" from the E or F Drive)



3.) Once the Flash drive is selected, title your document in the "File name" field.
-Select "Save"

Flash Drive Tutorial

How do I remove my USB Flash Drive from my computer?

1.) To safely remove your USB flash drive look for the  icon and click on it once.



NOTE: If you hover over the icon, text will appear that state the function of the icon- such as "Safely Remove Hardware"



2.) Select the "Safely remove USB Mass Storage Device."

- Your computer will display a message that your USB flash drive can be safely removed. "Safe to Remove Hardware"
- *(Remove your flash drive from your computer at this time)*

Flash Drive Tutorial

