Data yo-yo takes tough treatment
Ian Cuthbertson
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FIRST came the thin, square 1.4MB floppy drive, but then files grew too large. Then there was the thumb drive, or USB key-style device, but again, common capacities were quickly exceeded by our relentless push for ever more information to go.

Now there's the Seagate Pocket Drive, with 5GB of data storage that can literally be carried in a pocket.

True, if folks are equipped with DVD burners, the capacity is almost on par, but then there's the hassle of compatibility, not to mention getting to a destination to find the machine you're supposed to use has no DVD-ROM drive.

Smaller than a yo-yo but with a similar feel, it lends itself to being thrown about a bit in the air (which it can withstand) and is designed for instant plug-and-play capability with Macintosh OS X, Windows XP, Windows 2000 or Windows Me. Drivers must be installed for 98SE.

The USB connector rolls into the device to close the circle. Then it's into your pocket and off.

The device is USB 2.0-ready but will work, albeit slowly, with USB 1.1 equipment.

You can expect transfer rates of 12Mbps with USB 1.1, and up to 480Mbps with USB 2.0.

In real terms, using the device with our old USB 1.1-equipped XP machine, we transferred almost 20MB of image files to the drive in about 30 seconds.

Windows users can deploy included software security features for password protection, partitions, and creating bootable partitions.

Although almost any kind of data can be transferred, the drive spin speed is 3600rpm, which would make it unsuitable for video editing in some programs.

It costs $349.