

Glyph PortaGig Bus-Powered Hard Drive

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When it comes to hard drives, I've found the name Glyph to be synonymous with reliability. And, when it comes to data, reliability is one area that can't be taken too seriously. When I first came across the Glyph PortaGig drive just over a year ago, I was impressed. There are other drives out there that are roughly the same size, but none that I've encountered that provide the same performance or reliability.

Measuring 0.86 inches high by 3.3 inches wide by 5.2 inches deep, and weighing 0.6 lbs. (0.3 kg.), it is barely larger than a Treo, yet it offers uncompromised power, making portable recording and editing easy. The PortaGig, which utilizes a Seagate drive mechanism with 8 MB cache, is compatible with Apple OS 8.6, 9.X, 10.X, Microsoft Windows 98SE, ME, 2000, XP, Vista and Modern Unix-based, Linux, or BSD operating systems. It includes a FireWire 400 (6-pin to 6-pin) cable, a USB 2.0 Cable and a leather-carrying sleeve. The sleeve is cleverly designed so the drive can be used without being removed. This isn't good for prolonged use (as adequate ventilation is necessary), but for quick data transfers it's a boon.

There are four models of the drive available (and each has a one-year warranty). The PortaGig 80 GB has a list price of \$369 (street price around \$269), the PortaGig 100 GB has a list price of \$399 (street price around \$299). The PortaGig 120 GB has a list price of \$289 (street price around \$217), the PortaGig 1600 GB has a list price of \$399 (street price around \$299). The 80 GB and 100 GB models offer 7200RPM performance, while the 120 GB and 160 GB drives operate at 5400RPM. The drive utilizes the Prolific Bridging Chip and has a 10-millisecond average seek time (read), a 400 Mb/sec (50MB/sec) maximum transfer rate and a 35MB/sec sustained transfer rate.

The drive can be powered via USB, FireWire or by the optional power supply that lists for \$28. It is compatible with all major audio production packages that support FireWire storage, including Digidesign Pro Tools, Steinberg Nuendo and Cubase, Apple Logic, MOTU Digital Performer, Cakewalk Sonar, Sony Vegas, etc.

The PortaGig's small bus-powered enclosure is small enough to fit into a pocket, yet powerful enough to support high track-count audio sessions. Designed with a fanless, lightweight aluminum enclosure, it allows you to work on the road easily and reliably. It comes pre-formatted HFS+ and includes instructions to format it for other OS. If you are uniquely a PC user, formatting it NTFS (Windows Vista, XP, and 2000) or FAT32 (Wing9/SE) is a good idea. However, if you are using it on a PC but would also like the ability to use it on a Mac, I'd

recommend purchasing the MacDrive 6 PC utility that allows PCs to mount and use Mac-formatted volumes without compromised performance.

I picked up the 100 GB 7200RPM drive last spring and have been using it ever since. Originally I was just looking for a high-quality portable drive; I never dreamed I'd end up with something that provides this level of performance. I was mixing a high-resolution 96 kHz recording (with over 60 tracks on some songs) and I decided to see how the drive would perform. I copied the tune to the PortaGig, ran it off bus power and -- amazingly -- it worked perfectly. No lags, lock-ups or errors.

The bus power allows me to use the drive on the plane, in the park, on my porch or anywhere else I might happen to have my computer but lack AC power. Glyph warns that there may be some notebook computers that don't provide sufficient power to operate the drive, but I've never encountered any problems.

While it's a bit pricier than a full-size drive, the Glyph PortaGig doesn't compromise performance whatsoever. Anyone in need of a high performance drive that easily fits in the palm of your hand should give the Glyph PortaGig top consideration.

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