

Chicago Tribune

Sunday, June 20th, 2010

GEARBOX

Portable hard drive fits in your pocket

Name: Airhawk A3 Portable Hard Drive

What it is: A portable, pocket-size hard drive that connects to a Mac or PC via a USB port. It's made by Rocstor, a California-based company that specializes in fast, high-capacity data-storage units. Though the Airhawk is not an encrypted drive, encryption is one of Rocstor's specialties. The drive is both bus-powered and bootable, so if your laptop isn't booting up for some reason, the Airhawk A3 could get the system up as long as an operating system is loaded on the drive. The Airhawk contains a fast, high-capacity 2.5-inch SATA drive mechanism, with as much as 480 megabits per second transfer speed in a stylish case. Storage capacity ranges from 160 gigabytes to 640 gigabytes.

The good: I love its sleek shape. I've never had a travel backup drive that stored and protected my data (including photos) while looking CIA-cool. Just plug it into a computer and drag and drop data onto the drive. I used my Mac's Finder program for backup because the 160-gigabyte drive I tested didn't have the capacity for a full backup using the Mac's Time Machine program. PC users can drag and drop files using Windows Explorer. Although I tested a drive formatted for Mac, the Roc-



stor Airhawk A3 can be purchased pre-formatted with the FAT32 file system, so both Macs and PCs can read it. An FAT32 formatted drive allows users to store Mac or PC files on the same drive and access them from either operating system. I would recommend matching the storage capacity of the computer you are backing up.

The bad: The drive's only limitation seems to be capacity size and whether it's formatted for PC, Mac or both.

Cost: \$55 for the 160 gigabyte, 5400 RPM that I tested. Cost increases based on capacity and speed and interfaces, ranging from \$55 to \$140.

Available from: memorysuppliers.com

— Terry Gardner, *Special to Tribune Newspapers*