

Jump Drives, a Jump Forward in Portable Storage Space

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Technology keeps on leaping forward, and we need to try to keep up. Our schools have continued to be at the forefront of new and better ways of doing things. Principals and teachers are making use of new technologies every day.

Programs like *Renweb*, which allows parents to access their own student's grades on line via the web, keeps parents informed on how their child is doing and even what homework is due. This program is actively improving performance in our schools. *Accelerated Reader* is another program that is helping us achieve excellence by greatly improving a student's reading skill level. Also, most of our students have access to the Internet for research and other school projects. We even have schools that have a wireless network so students can take their laptops from class to class without having to plug into a network cable. However, we are not in the business of just being current, but we intend to be a leader in the field of technology for education.

I can remember when floppy disks were 5 ¼ inches and held 360 kilobytes of space. Then they moved to 3 ½ inch floppy disks holding only 1.4MB. And now, we have the Flash drive which can hold up to 4GB, at least for now. This technology is advancing very quickly and the best part is, that the price is dropping. Just like all technologies, they are getting better, smaller, and cheaper.

One of the problems with floppy disks is that most viruses automatically attach themselves to that drive. Floppy disks have a greater chance of transferring viruses from home to school and back again. A floppy disk can only hold 1.4MB of space, which is not enough for the smallest Power Point presentation. Floppy disks are very unreliable, data can be lost very easily and, of course, they are easily broken into.

There is a solution for this problem. The solution is the Flash drive, sometimes called a Jump drive or memory stick. Most viruses don't automatically attach to your Jump drive, only if you're transferring a file that is already infected with a virus. But, then if you have a good anti-virus program, you shouldn't have that problem. You can store far more files with Jump drives which go from 32MB up to 4GB of space. Jump drives are simple to use and very durable. They can be put on your keychain or on a lanyard since they're about the size of a pack of gum. They work well with XP and will work even on Windows 98 after installing a driver. Personally, I don't know how I ever managed without one. I carry all the programs that I use for fixing computers on one stick, and I even can reinstall Windows 98 from my Jump drive.

The prices for the Jump drive have really dropped in the last little while which makes it really affordable. I've seen 32MB jump drives sell for as low as \$20.00, which would hold as much as 22 floppy disks. But even now, 32MB Jump drives are becoming obsolete. The 64MB Jump drive would hold as much as 44 floppy disks. If you go to <http://www.flash-memory-store.com> you will find 64MB as low as \$14.95US up to 4GB

as low as \$308.95US. Just think of all the possibilities. No floppy disks floating about in your briefcase or in your student's backpacks.

The positive advantage is that a student can save numerous assignments on his or her Jump drive, take it home, and continue to work on it there. Teachers as well can benefit. A teacher can carry all their students' grades and important files on their own Jump drive. Some Jump drives can be password protected. And all those school digital pictures taken for the yearbook can be stored on your Jump drive.

We need to be alert to new technologies that will help our students become the best they can be. Jump drives are an excellent tool that we can use to keep our teachers and students in the forefront. Our schools are striving for excellence, and with God's help, this will be a reality.

For additional information on Jump drives, you can check out this website.

<http://www.wsd1.org/bitsbytes/0405/bbnov04/#STORY2>