

Now location shooters can have RAID security that's small enough to carry along.

BY STAN SHOLIK

Location safety

NEWERTECH GUARDIAN MAXIMUS MINI

Safely storing image files is seldom given much thought by location photographers, and that goes for wedding, sports and event photographers—that is, until a disastrous data loss occurs. At that point, it's too late.

Studio photographers have lots of solutions for minimizing the risk of data loss, the best of which is saving images to a RAID 1 or RAID 5 enclosure. Unfortunately for location shooters, these devices tend to be bulky and heavy, and they have greater capacity than needed for a typical shoot.

Location photographers need to travel light, but they need the same protection against data loss. Transferring photos from the camera to a laptop, even backing up the images to an external drive, isn't as secure as storing them

in a RAID 1 array of two identical drives. Then if one of those drives should fail, the data can be totally rebuilt from the other drive.

NewerTech has a solution for location photographers that provides RAID 1 protection in an enclosure not much larger than two bare 2.5-inch hard drives stacked, weighing in at just 1.5 pounds. The solution is the Guardian MAXimus Mini, and it ships with drives formatted for Mac OSX computers; the drives can be reformatted for Windows or older Mac systems.

The MAXimus Mini holds two 2.5-inch hard drives of the type commonly found in laptops. The unit I reviewed arrived with two 320GB Hitachi 7200rpm SATA drives, which are solid drives that are a reasonable choice

of price and performance level for this product test. Personally, I prefer the more expensive but faster Seagate Momentus or Western Digital Scorpio drives that are pretty much state of the art among 2.5-inch spinning hard drives. NewerTech sells the enclosure for \$114.99, sans hard drives. For Windows users, I recommend purchasing the bare enclosure and installing your own drives, since the drives would have to be formatted anyway.

The MAXimus Mini is also available with 2.5-inch solid state drives, which would be preferable, as these drives are even more shock and vibration resistant than spinning drives. The price, however, is significantly greater.

Unscrew the cover plate and the drives mount into trays that slide into the back of the metal enclosure. The trays fit snugly without screws, and the drives are held by screws in the trays. This all seems quite secure and vibration resistant. The read/write heads of the hard drives I've mentioned all lock down when switched off, and turned on, they even sense when the drive is falling. If your MAXimus Mini drops toward the floor, the heads instantly swing out of the way and lock down in an attempt to prevent drive damage.

The data connectors and power connector are on the back of the unit, along with the access door. Data ports include two FireWire 800, one eSATA and one USB 2.0, and the appropriate cables are supplied.

If you use the FireWire 800 port, you can even leave the power adapter at home. If you use the eSATA port, you can also power the unit with a FireWire 800 cable, without the power adapter. The eSATA provided the faster transfer by far when I tested it on my Windows

The NewerTech Guardian MAXimus Mini is a compact RAID enclosure not much larger than a Macintosh mouse designed for location photographers and videographers.

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THE GOODS: PRO REVIEW



The rear of the MAXimus Mini incorporates two FireWire 800 ports, an eSATA port and a USB 2.0 port along with the power connection if needed. The hard drives reside behind the panel above these.

computer using the same file set I tested on my FireWire 800 Mac.

The front of the MAXimus Mini features a backlit LCD that displays the RAID config-

uration. You also use it to view the menu options, which you navigate by pressing the menu button and a second button on the other side of the LCD. There are enough menu choices to satisfy any need, but I looked at them out of curiosity only. The MAXimus Mini really is plug-and-play for the Mac, and needs formatting only for Windows systems. LEDs below the LCD glow green during read and write, and red if a drive is damaged or missing.

Configured as I received it with two 320GB drives, the MSRP is about \$219.99. A CD with backup software and data cables are also included. Additional information on the MAXimus Mini enclosure and the hard drive options is available at NewerTech.com.

The NewerTech MAXimus Mini is an excellent choice for location photographers who like a good night's sleep without worrying if their data will be there in the morning. ■

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