



What's the Big Deal about USB?



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(A Windows Magazine Article)

We've all heard about the splendor of Universal Serial Bus (USB) peripherals, but what are the real benefits?

1. Convenience: USB devices provide a plug-and-play option that support "hot swapping," which means that those annoying peripheral installation reboots are history.
2. Speed: Speed is one of USB's most significant advantages. USB devices transfer at a rate of 12 Mbps, about "100 times faster than even the fastest serial port."
3. Power: USB connections provide up to 500 milliamps of power "eliminating the need for external power supplies".
4. Connections: Theoretically, you can connect up to 127 USB devices to a single USB port by daisy-chaining USB peripherals. However, the power provided by the USB port can be drained by too many peripherals, so a powered USB hub is a requirement for multiple power hungry devices.

Overall the promise of faster standard connections is promising technology. The increased speed for storage devices and multimedia data alone makes USB technology attractive. Windows 95 (running Service Release 2.1) and Windows 98 both support USB devices. Although Windows NT 4.0 does not support USB, it will definitely be a feature of Windows 2000 (NT 5).

The bottom line is that the number of USB devices will continue to proliferate with USB well positioned to become the next standard interface. What should be your USB strategy for the time being? Just this: "When you buy a new PC make sure it has at least one USB port. And when you add peripherals, think USB first."

<http://winmag.com/library/1999/0101/fea0063.htm>

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