

iStorage diskAshur²

Nigel Atherton tests a secure portable storage device

● £219 ● istorage-uk.com

STORAGE may not be sexy but it's a necessary ongoing expense for photographers in the digital age, especially with rising pixel counts and the move to 4K video. While cloud and desktop storage have their place, there will always be a need for a reliable portable device for backing up and transporting image files in the field, and there are many reasons why photographers may need it to be password protected. For example, you could be photographing commercially sensitive subjects or, in this post-GDPR world, holding private client data such as contact and payment details.

iStorage produces a range of encrypted storage devices, including datAshur USB pen drives and diskAshur DT desktop units, but the diskAshur² range is its best-selling portable device. Our 1TB review sample fits in a jeans pocket and weighs around 200g. It comes with a short integrated USB 3.1 cable that also provides power, and slots into a groove in the body when not in use.

Its selling point is what the company describes as military-grade 256-bit full disk hardware encryption, which meets US government security standards. The telephone-style alphanumeric keypad on the side is linked to a dedicated hardware-based secure micro-processor. Three PIN codes of between seven and 15 characters can be set, if required: a user PIN, an admin PIN and a self-destruct PIN which instantly deletes all the data.

The diskAshur² is built to withstand whatever is thrown at it, whether accidental or deliberate. Its rubberised coating and a water-resistant epoxy-coated keypad protects it from day-to-day knocks and scrapes while an armoury of self-defence mechanisms defend it from malicious attack, including, intriguingly, by laser (so take note, Bond villains). On sensing a hacking attempt the drive automatically enters a deadlock frozen state. Even the internal components are protected by a layer of epoxy resin to prevent tampering or removal.

Verdict

The claimed read and write speeds of 148Mbps and 141Mbps are optimistic, but performance is within the average range for such devices. However if speed is critical, you'll be better off with one of the SSD versions. Overall the iStorage diskAshur² is very expensive for a hard drive. But while you could buy a regular hard drive for a quarter of the price and use software encryption, it wouldn't be as secure.

ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE STREET PRICES



Options

The diskAshur² is available in four colours, and with six HDD and six SSD capacities.

Military-grade security

Designed and programmed to resist all 'Brute Force' attacks.

Tough build

The rugged, rubberised casing is rated to IP56 standard for water and dust resistance. A protective zip case is also supplied.

PIN protection

A 7- to 15-digit PIN code can be set for both user and administrator. After 15 incorrect attempts the data is wiped.

Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★

At a glance

- USB 3.1 portable encrypted hard drive
- Capacities up to 5TB
- AES-XTS 256-bit hardware encryption
- OS & platform independent
- 124x84x19mm, 200g

WHICH MODEL?

The iStorage DiskAshur² comes in a choice of colours – blue, red, green or black – and is available either as a hard disk drive (HDD) in a range of capacities from 500GB to 5TB, or as a more expensive solid state drive (SSD) in capacities from 128GB to 4TB. Prices range from £159 for the 500GB HDD model to an eye-watering £1,899 for the 4TB SSD. Our 1TB HDD costs £219.