Kicking the Tires

by Frank Petrie

Review

Product: D-Link DFB-H7
Company: D-Link <http://www.dlink.com/products/?pid=225>
Requirements: OS X.1 or greater
Price: (US) $59.00
Test Rig: iBook G4/933/640 MB RAM
Review Date: 04 February 2004

I need ports. And not just wine. Although that would be welcome. No, I need USB ports and, most definitely, FireWire ports. Bluetooth hasn't been adopted enough yet, so alas, I must hardwire my peripherals.

"Connect all of your digital media peripherals with the DFB-H7. With 4 USB 2.0 ports for connecting all of your USB peripherals and 3 Firewire ports, you have plenty of room to connect your DV camcorder, hard drives, digital cameras, web

cams or other Firewire and USB devices. Compliant with both USB 2.0 and Firewire standards, 1.5/12/100/400/480Mbps speeds are supported ..."

And it also purees! Let's see if what they say holds true.

THE GOOD

The hub comes equipped with all the necessary plugs. And you don't have to install any drivers whatsoever. Just plug it in and get back to work.

It's compact and the only trouble I had during installation was gathering the peripheral's wires and trying to either tie them up or hide them from view. It would be better if they gave you shorter wires. The plugs in the back connect to your computer and power source. The plugs on the front panel are for you to go wild.

And that's it. Literally ... that's all there is to it.

THE BAD

Nada.

THE UGLY

Actually, even though there are four USB 2.0 ports, there are only TWO FireWire ports, not the advertised THREE. How do they get away with this ... ahem ... oversight? Well, the one on the back panel is counted, even though you can't use it for input.

I contacted D-Link's free tech support and asked what's up with that? A rep told me to email support (which was strange as he was from support) and gave me an 800 number to call. I spoke with the operator who put me through to the Complaint Department, which turned out to be a recorded request for my name and number. Four days later and they still haven't returned my call.

THE CLOSE

The DFB-H7 works extremely well. It's brainless to install (I have no brain, so I know this to be a fact). But I cannot express strongly enough their creative advertising copy. I am happy with the performance of the product but completely disillusioned withy companies ethics. (To be fair, lots of companies pull the childish act.)

If this exactly fits your needs or so does one of their other products, then by all means, you can trust the quality. But I would call them first to see what the product ACTUALLY does.

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