



THE INDEPENDENT GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY



- HOME
- REVIEWS
- DOWNLOADS
- SOLUTIONS
- NEWS
- OPINIONS
- SHOP
- DISCUSSIONS

My Account | Sign In | Not a member? Join now

SEARCH

PC Magazine



ADVERTISEMENT

ROLL OVER FOR MORE INFO: MOBILE SOLUTIONS | DESKTOP UPGRADES

Home > Product Guides > Storage devices > Portable > StealthSurfer USB 2.0



### StealthSurfer USB 2.0

By [Jeremy A. Kaplan](#)

June 1, 2004

Total posts: [1](#)

ENLARGE

Editor Rating: ●●●●○

Rate it Yourself

- Print
- Email
- Save
- Discuss
- Subscribe

#### Company:

Stealth Ideas, Inc., [www.stealthsurfer.biz](http://www.stealthsurfer.biz)

#### Price:

128MB: \$99.95 direct; 256MB: \$159.95; 512MB: \$199.95

#### Spec Data:

128MB; USB 2.0; Secure Web surfing, smallest Flash drive available.

#### Pros:

Tiny size. Very good price. Cute "full-size" cover. Secure Web browsing and file storage.

#### Cons:

So small it's easy to lose. Web browser is slow to launch.

#### Bottom Line:

Secure Web surfing is handy, although for home use, not business use: Your corporation's IT department can easily watch which sites you go to regardless of which browser you use, and the drive's small size sure is neat, albeit problematic.

#### Review

Plug the StealthSurfer USB 2.0 into your USB port and a login application appears. Change the default password to your own, log in, and the device's... [click here for full review](#)

[< back](#)

[next >](#)

#### table of contents Feature-Rich Flash Drives

- Feature-Rich Flash Drives, Part II
- PQI Intelligent Stick 2.0
- Sony Micro Vault with Fingerprint Access
- SOYO Aerialink Wireless Flash Combo
- **StealthSurfer USB 2.0**

#### At a Glance

[Full Review](#)

#### top sellers

[Compare Tech Shop Deals](#)

1. Electronic Arts BATTLEFIELD
2. Half-Life: Platinum Edition 2
3. Microsoft Lineage II: The Chaotic Chronicle - Windows
4. Microsoft Flight Simulator 2004: A Century of Flight
5. Havas Half-Life more >

#### product guides

- Desktops
- Digital Cameras
- Displays
- DVD Creation
- Handhelds
- MP3 Players
- Notebooks
- Printers
- Wireless Networks
- Windows XP

Click here for our full product guides list

ADVERTISEMENT

HITACHI Inspire the Next

Microdrive<sup>®</sup> Digital Media from Hitachi

HITACHI Inspire the Next

#### ZIFF DAVIS PARTNER SITES:

[Visual Studio & .Net Developer Center](#)

#### ZIFF DAVIS FEATURED SITES:

[IT Reseller News & Resources](#)

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

INSIDER'S SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM  
PC MAGAZINE DIGITAL FOR JUST \$9.99

Name

Email (e.g. user@jsp.com)



How secure are you in your network security?



[More info >](#)

## Feature-Rich Flash Drives, Part II

June 1, 2004

You asked. We listened. Readers clamored for additional flash drive reviews, and since there seems to be no end to the innovation from manufacturers, we present our second roundup of flash drives that do more than just store files. In our [first roundup](#), we reviewed USB drives with built-in biometric sensors, file-synchronization abilities, and portable desktop features. This time around, we look at secure computing, ultra-tiny (too tiny?) flash drives, and anonymous Web-surfing tools. Read on for more!

### PQI Intelligent Stick 2.0

June 1, 2004

By [Jeremy A. Kaplan](#)

#### Company:

PQI Corp., [www.pqi1st.com](http://www.pqi1st.com)

#### Price:

\$35 street

#### Spec Data:

128MB; USB 2.0; smallest flash drive available.

#### Pros:

Tiny size. Very good price.

#### Cons:

So small it's easy to lose.

#### Bottom Line:

Beyond its tiny size, the PQI Intelligent Stick 2.0 is undistinguished. If you desire a tiny flash drive, look instead to the [StealthSurfer](#), a somewhat more useful tool that shares the same design.

#### Review

As flash drives get smaller and smarter, we're reminded of the law of diminishing returns: If one factor is increased while the others remain constant, the overall return... [click here for full review](#)

### PQI Intelligent Stick 2.0

As flash drives get smaller and smarter, we're reminded of the law of diminishing returns: If one factor is increased while the others remain constant, the overall return is likely to decrease at a certain point. There is a point at which a gadget can be too small, and this seems to be happening in the flash drive market. We don't need them to get any smaller, and in fact, being too small can be a serious problem. The PQI Intelligent Stick 2.0 is the smallest, thinnest, lightest flash drive on the market. It weighs about 0.2 ounces and measures just 0.1 inches thick—truly a feat of engineering.

At heart, the Intelligent Stick is a standard flash-memory chip encased in plastic. To achieve the tiny size, the company modified the standard USB plug, removing the metal wrapper that usually shrouds the interface (see photo). The connector still works in the same way, of course, and actually seems easier to plug into a PC's hidden ports (like those on the back) than a standard plug. Additionally, the Intelligent Stick won't hang far off the back of your computer or interfere with your keyboard if you've got USB ports in the front of your PC.

There are more problems with this shape than benefits, however. For starters, it's much easier to misplace, as are tiny SecureDigital memory cards and diminutive XD cards. To address this issue, the company sells plastic travel cases and transparent adapters that convert it to the size of a standard flash drive, eliminating any advantage of the stick's miniscule size.

Beyond its size, the PQI Intelligent Stick 2.0 is undistinguished, so after you've used it once, set it aside, and subsequently lost it, you won't remember why you wanted it anyway. The company describes it as "a new generation flash memory card!" but we're not sure exactly what earns it this hyperbole. If you must have the smallest flash drive on the market, look instead to the [StealthSurfer](#), a slightly more useful tool. It has the same shape and size as the Intelligent Stick but includes software to let you browse the Web privately.

More flash drive reviews:

- [Forward Solutions Migo](#)
- [Feature-Rich Flash Drives, Part II](#)

## StealthSurfer USB 2.0

June 1, 2004

By [Jeremy A. Kaplan](#)

### Company:

Stealth Ideas, Inc., [www.stealthsurfer.biz](http://www.stealthsurfer.biz)

### Price:

128MB: \$99.95 direct; 256MB: \$159.95; 512MB: \$199.95

### Spec Data:

128MB; USB 2.0; Secure Web surfing, smallest Flash drive available.

### Pros:

Tiny size. Very good price. Cute "full-size" cover. Secure Web browsing and file storage.

### Cons:

So small it's easy to lose. Web browser is slow to launch.

### Bottom Line:

Secure Web surfing is handy, although for home use, not business use: Your corporation's IT department can easily watch which sites you go to regardless of which browser you use, and the drive's small size sure is neat, albeit problematic.

### Review

Plug the StealthSurfer USB 2.0 into your USB port and a login application appears. Change the default password to your own, log in, and the device's... [click here for full review](#)

## StealthSurfer USB 2.0

Plug the StealthSurfer USB 2.0 into your USB port and a login application appears. Change the default password to your own, log in, and the device's real contents show themselves—a custom version of Netscape Navigator 7.0 that lets you browse the Web and leave no traces on your PC. (Note: There's no option to choose a different browser.) And did we mention that this flash drive is tiny? Its petite shape—easy to lose is another way to describe it—is similar to the [PQI Intelligent Stick 2.0](#). A see-through "full-size" case is included to help prevent it from being misplaced.

The secure browser is a touch slow to launch, taking about 15 seconds to load your startup page even on a USB 2.0 system, and substantially longer over USB 1.1, of course. To be fair, most of the delay is in launching Netscape Navigator, which is a far cry from peppy. The security element of this launch time causes only a 4 or 5-second delay. Once up and running, however, the lag was nearly unnoticeable. We expected that downloading Web pages to slow flash memory rather than to the fast hard drive would dent performance, but this simply wasn't the case.

So how does the StealthSurfer work? It stores all your cookies, history, and downloaded cache files on the flash drive itself, meaning there's no record of your Web surfing on the computer. If you're searching for an engagement ring for a loved one, or even holiday presents for tech-savvy kids, this just might be the ticket. An analysis of your network activity would reveal your surfing habits, however, so you may not want to try this at work.

In addition to the secure browsing, the StealthSurfer gives you a secure, encrypted place to store files. The drive is formatted into two partitions, one visible only after entering your password. The recently released StealthSurfer 2.0 improves on the earlier USB 1.1 version in several ways, including an important file format change. The cluster size on the first flash drive was 16K, meaning the minimum file size was 16K. In other words, every 1K cookie or 2K Web site logo you browsed past was saved on the flash drive as a 16K file, rapidly eating through its capacity. In the new StealthSurfer, cluster size is a mere 2K, meaning you'll use the drive's capacity much more effectively. The giant Netscape package alone still ate through nearly 38MB of our flash drive, however. You'll need at least a 128MB device to have any offline storage. And, of course, if you forget the password, a reset will delete all data on the StealthSurfer.

We'd like to see secure e-mail as well, an ability included on some other flash drives we've seen. We'd also prefer a faster browser. But the ease of setup was certainly satisfying, and the StealthSurfer's tiny size will make it easy to carry around at all times. We suggest that you do so: Set it down and you'll risk losing it forever./p>

*More portable storage reviews:*

- [Forward Solutions Migo](#)
- [Feature-Rich Flash Drives, Part II](#)
- [StealthSurfer USB 2.0](#)
- [SOYO Aerialink Wireless Flash Combo](#)
- [Sony Micro Vault with Fingerprint Access](#)
- [more](#)

Copyright (c) 2004 Ziff Davis Media Inc. All Rights Reserved.