

### Acer Cloud

After acquiring iGware, a company offering cloud software and infrastructure tools, Acer has announced Acer Cloud which will begin operations in late September

### LaCie Rugged Mini

LaCie Rugged Mini is a USB 3 portable drive with five layers of protection that makes it scratch, rain and water resistant

# What's in Store?

With portable drives becoming the preferred mode of carrying around your data, we decided to pit the best against each other to help you select the best one for your needs.



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Last year when we had done the External Hard drive comparison test, we noticed two trends. Companies were raising the capacities along with affordable pricing. Second was that most of the drives had impressive designs. This year has seen a new technology emerge, which should comfortably become mainstream by the next time we have a comparison test.

We are talking about the USB 3.0 technology which has a theoretical transfer rate of 5 Gbps as opposed to the theoretical speeds of 480 Mbps offered by USB 2.0. Where we

had just one USB 3.0 drive in our last comparison, this one has over 15 drives which are USB 3.0 compatible. Another thing we noticed is that you no longer need to use your power supply if you are using a 1TB portable drive. Designs are getting impressive but at the same time companies are offering backup and encryption utilities to differentiate their offerings. So let's just start off with the drives.

### USB 3.0 drives

Last year we had received just one USB 3.0 drive for the comparison test and it had come with a USB 3.0 adapter. Now almost every other motherboard has a USB 3.0 port. Also the prices of these drives

are becoming affordable. We received 14 drives from nine different brands, which were more than the USB 2.0 drives

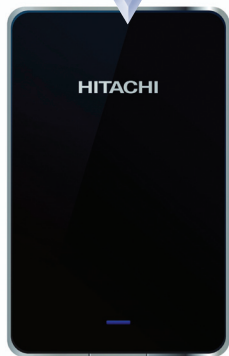
Silicon Power sent us three drives namely the Diamond D10 (750 GB), Armor A80 (640GB) and Stream S10 (750 GB). Design wise, they were as different as chalk and cheese, with the Stream S10 looking the smartest with its race-car like form factor and bright colors. The Armor A80 as the name suggests is a rugged drive which seems bulky when compared to the other two, but it is waterproof and shock-proof. It comes with two USB 3.0 cables, one is an extremely short one, ideal for laptops and the other is a longer cable. The Diamond D10 has com-

pact form factor and a glossy chequered design. The Silicon Power drives offer you the SP Widget which is a utility which can be downloaded from their website that offers data encryption, data and email backup and backup of your My Favorites folder, etc.

Seagate's GoFlex Slim is one drive that left us quite impressed with its slim profile and great transfer speeds thanks to the 7200 RPM drive within it. Although at 320GB it was the lowest capacity portable drive in this category. The other USB 3.0 drive from Seagate was the highest capacity portable drive at 1.5TB which came in a piano black glossy finish. Though it may not win any slim awards,

[http://bit.ly/digit\\_HDD](http://bit.ly/digit_HDD)

Find the performance table of the six powered drives from this test



Hitachi Touro Mobile Pro 500GB

you will not bother with that if you can carry 1.5TB of data in your pocket.

Western Digital, the only competitor Seagate has in the internal HDD market, had the maximum capacity drive amongst all the participants with its My Book Essential 3 TB drive. It requires additional power supply, but you can easily access all 3 TB of data unlike the use of a host bus adaptor in its internal drive avatar. The drive has good ventilation across the top and rear edge which helps keep the drive cool under operation. The other two drives from WD were the standard My Passport Essential drives with capacities such as 500GB and 1TB. Both the drives look identical. WD SmartWare utility is bundled in each of these drives which allows you to password protect your data and back up your data. On installation of the SmartWare utility, it will scan your system and segregate your data into System, Pictures, Other, Music, Movies, and Documents in a graphical format. You can then either backup entire categories or pick and choose folders the next time you connect your drive and Run Backup to instantly backup data.



WD My Book Essential 3 TB

Hitachi Touro Mobile Pro 500GB drive looks exactly like an iPhone4 thanks to its black body and silver lining on the edge with curved edges and flat surfaces. It was the only drive that offered 3GB

of cloud storage facility. This in addition to the Hitachi Backup utility allows you to backup your data locally as well as on the cloud. Data on the cloud can be accessed from anywhere as long as you have a net connection. You have an upgrade option to 250 GB at \$49 (approx ₹2,000). The Touro houses a fast 7200 RPM drive.

Omega eGo 500GB portable drive has a smart x-shaped rubber covering which protects it from drops or pressure. Buffalo Mini Station 500GB and Apacer AC230 were simple looking drives with glowing lights. Buffalo Mini Station comes with a variety of utilities such as backup utility, secure lock manager, RAMDISK utility and TurboPC with Turbo Copy for speedy transfer.

ADATA sent us two USB 3.0 drives, one portable and one requiring an external power supply. ADATA Classic CH11 is the 1TB portable drive coming in an all white body. It does not come with any pre-installed softwares. The Nobility NHO3 is also a 1TB drive which comes with a power supply and more than makes up for the plain jane looks of the Classic CH11. It has a piano black glossy finish and is rectangular in shape

## Want to make a bootable USB?

To make a Windows 7 bootable USB drive use the popular utility Windows 7 USB/DVD Download Tool available on [http://bit.ly/digit\\_hdd01](http://bit.ly/digit_hdd01)

External HDD

## HOW WE TESTED

We divided the external drives into four categories. For Portable Drives we had a) Drives less than or equal to 750 GB and b) Drives greater than 750 GB. Drives that required an external power supply were clubbed together. Finally Flash drives were divided into a) Drives with capacity under 32 GB and b) Drives with a capacity of 32 GB and up. We did not demarcate between USB 2.0 drives and USB 3.0 drives as the cost per GB is not significantly different in either cases and USB 3.0 drives are backward compatible.

The test bed was made up of following components:

Processor: Intel Core i7-2600K @ 3.4GHz

Memory: 2 x 2GB Corsair Dominator DDR3 RAM @ 1333MHz and timing of 9-9-9-24

Motherboard: Intel DP67BG

OS: Windows 7 Ultimate (64-bit)

OS Drive: Intel SSDSA2SH080GIGN (80 GB SSD)

RAID 0 combination: 2 x 300GB WD Velociraptor (SATA 2, 10000 RPM)

Graphics Card: AMD Radeon HD 6850

Power Supply: Corsair HX620W

We installed a clean copy of Windows 7 Ultimate on the Intel 80 GB SSD and installed the synthetic benchmarks such as HD Tune Pro 4.0 and SiSoftware Sandra 2011 on the SSD. Two partitions were created on the WD Velociraptor RAID 0 array and we used it for real life data transfer tests.

We used HD Tune Pro 4.0.1 for testing the Average Read / Write and Read Burst speeds as well as SiSoft Sandra 2011. Both these benchmarks require unformatted drives to perform write testing.

For our Real World tests we used a 4 GB RAR File and a 4GB Assorted file, to simulate a sequential and assorted file transfer scenario. These files were copied to and from the RAID 0 array to the external drives under test. We also performed file transfer tests within the two partitions of the external drives. Finally, we used Adobe Photoshop CS2 to test the amount of time taken to load a 1GB file. Both the image and the scratch disk were kept on the test drives on the same partition, effectively stimulating file access. We did not perform intra-drive file transfer and Photoshop file access on Flash drives.

with concave edges. There are enough grooves around the edges to keep the drive cool. On the front portion it has a button for backup, which is a nice touch as opposed to going through a wizard to back up your data.

## Performance

We had around four drives crossing the 100 MB/s barrier as far as sequential read and write was concerned. ADATA Nobility NHO3 gave very

impressive read and write speeds of over 120 MB/s. Seagate GoFlex Slim was another drive that left us impressed with its performance. When it came to Assorted file read, only WD My Book and Nobility NHO3 crossed the 100 MB/s. Both these drives are powered, whereas GoFlex Slim and Hitachi Touro were the only portable drives to reach within a breathing distance of 100 MB/s in assorted read tests.

## Portable Drives

## Less than or equal to 750GB

Brand	Hitachi	Iomega	Silicon Power	Seagate	WD	Silicon Power	Silicon Power	Buffalo
<b>Model Name</b>	Touro Mobile Pro	eGo	Armour A80	GoFlex Slim	My Passport Essential	Diamond D10	Stream S10	Mini Station
<b>Capacity</b>	500	500	640	320	500	750	750	500
<b>Cost Per GB (₹)</b>	9.44	8.599	5.820	15.096	9.230	5.239	5.354	7.515
<b>Price (₹)</b>	4,400	3,999	3,470	4,500	4,299	3,660	3,740	3,500
<b>Features (Out of 10)</b>	5.5	3	6.5	6.5	6.5	8	8	6.5
<b>Performance (Out of 90)</b>	66.97	48.378	60.53	57.26	47.746	54.47	53.083	47.911
<b>Grand Total (Out Of 100)</b>	72.47	51.37	67.03	63.76	54.24	62.47	61.08	54.41
<b>Specifications</b>								
HDD capacity (unformatted) (GB)	465.76	465.07	596.17	298.09	465.75	698.64	698.54	465.73
Interface	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0
Weight (gms)	155	200	270	160	139	155	145	175
<b>Features (Y/N)</b>								
Backup Utility	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Encryption Utility	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cloud Storage	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Cover	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
<b>Performance</b>								
<b>HD Tune Pro 4.01</b>								
Average Read (MBps)	109.8	82.2	93.1	108.4	74.7	92.1	89.8	74.4
Average Write (MBps)	108.9	81.7	96.9	103.1	71.1	86.5	83.2	71.3
Access Time (Read, ms)	8.01	9.95	10.1	8.74	10.1	11.4	10.7	10
Access Time (Write, ms)	4.79	4.06	4.1	14.1	14.4	14.3	14.4	6.1
Read Burst Speed (MBps)	182.1	174.7	180.4	176.5	149.7	150.6	152.4	104.1
CPU Usage (In %)	2.3	1.6	2	2.4	1.6	2.3	2.1	1.8
<b>Random Access (Read 1 MB)</b>								
Operations per sec (IOPS)	34	27	31	31	28	30	29	27
Average Access Time (ms)	28.72	36.45	31.07	31.51	35	32.92	33.5	36.37
<b>Random Access (Write 1 MB)</b>								
Operations per sec (IOPS)	36	19	28	26	33	39	38	22
Average Access Time (ms)	27.53	54.55	34.55	37.8	29.85	25.16	26.2	44.9
<b>SiSoft Sandra 2011</b>								
Drive Index, Read (MBps)	86.46	65.55	75.33	86.73	60.5	75.55	72.66	62
Access Time, read (ms)	17	19	17	18.8	18.25	18.3	18	18.27
Drive Index, Write (MBps)	86.23	78.46	74.53	87.1	61	75.26	72.5	61.13
Access time, write (ms)	1.8	5.58	1.3	9.13	12.8	11.36	12.16	1.18
<b>Real World Tests (higher is better)</b>								
File Write 4 GB Single File (MB/s)	108.33	82.5	96.06	108.9	75.5	91.2	87.27	74.01
File Write Test Assorted 4 GB File (MB/s)	73.85	48.63	74.67	55.35	54.17	56.04	56.52	51.37
Read Test Single 4 GB File (MB/s)	104.83	51.63	90.02	105.14	72.7	88.1	89.74	71.91
Read Test Assorted 4 GB File (MB/s)	98.03	77.11	85.47	94.85	69.61	85.13	82.39	68.28
Intra Drive Test (Read/Write) Sequential	38.53	24.26	26.08	21.16	24.52	28.44	28.05	18.34
Intra Drive Test (Read/Write) Assorted	37.23	23.54	31.75	28.49	27.95	31.26	30.61	25.76
<b>PhotoShop CS2 (secs, lower is better)</b>	31.85	42.05	40.62	37.76	44.86	30.93	42.47	54.11

**Over 750 GB**

	Apacer	WD	ADATA	Apacer	Seagate	WD	Seagate	WD	ADATA	Transcend	Seagate
	AC230	My Passport for Mac	Nobility NH92	AC203	GoFlex Pro	My Passport Studio	FreeAgent GoFlex	My Passport Essential SE	Classic CH11	StoreJet	FreeAgent GoFlex
	500	500	750	750	500	500	1500	1000	1000	1000	1000
	12.665	10.103	5.725	5.740	12.880	11.823	8.94	6.97	5.42	9.55	9.66
	5,899	4,699	4,000	4,010	5,999	5,499	12,500	6,499	5,050	8,900	9,000
	3.5	6.5	6.5	5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	0	6.5	6.5
	47.113	25.291	25.139	24.629	26.565	24.68	52.34	45.83	48.08	26.61	21.38
	50.61	31.79	31.63	29.62	33.06	31.18	58.84	52.33	48.08	33.11	27.88
	465.76	465.11	698.64	698.64	465.76	465.11	1397.26	931.48	931.51	931.51	931.51
	USB 3.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0
	143	200	152	143	160	180	280	200	225	256	440
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	76.8	32.1	31.2	31.3	32.1	32.2	92.1	81.3	86.2	32.8	33.1
	75.8	24.5	25.3	25.5	25.89	24.5	87.8	76.2	82.9	26.2	24.9
	9.86	10.1	10.2	10.1	8.51	10.1	7.97	10.6	9.94	10.8	9.8
	17.5	3.7	17.9	17.5	4.02	4.05	1.9	16.2	19.2	10.2	17.1
	175.4	33.3	33.8	33.3	34.3	32.9	184.4	142.9	101.7	33.3	33.3
	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.8	1	1.8	1.8	2.3	1.5
	30	18	20	20	20	19	25	28	30	21	18
	32.28	52.69	49.11	48.85	49.54	51.54	39.69	34.12	32.3	47.57	53.17
	26	21	28	25	18	22	20	19	27	24	11
	38.36	45.84	38.58	38.5	53.64	43.83	48.42	50.69	36.3	40.1	87.78
	67.64	32.56	31	31	32.85	32.31	74.22	66.53	69.42	32.75	33
	15.87	18.3	13.8	17.8	14.12	18	24.24	20.49	12	13.52	23.39
	68	26	28.72	28.88	28.8	26	74.73	66.38	69.37	28.87	28.5
	17	3.57	18.72	16	3.27	5.16	28.25	16	23.27	3.53	29
	73.92	27.54	28.44	28.56	26.25	27.58	87.48	78.11	80.15	30.34	28.44
	38.24	22.5	23.93	23.85	24.52	22.7	50.58	52.23	42.22	24.99	20.89
	75.51	32.25	31.95	32.25	32.35	31.75	89.68	78.22	83.75	31.48	31.75
	71.25	30.43	31.69	31.5	31.2	30.34	83.77	71.96	76.79	31.08	30.11
	21.91	11.53	13.29	13.42	11.69	8.56	16.85	16.65	21.67	12.92	8.35
	23.67	12.31	11.54	12.13	13.6	10.31	23.27	23.01	24.23	13.93	10.01
	34.24	85.9	81.97	81.21	80.11	53.97	30.17	43.12	41.02	78.81	131

## WD Scorpio Blue 1TB

Western digital has launched a 1 TB iteration of its value Scorpion Blue. Coming in a 2.5-inch form factor with 5400 RPM and 8MB buffer

## Google buys PittPatt

Google recently acquired PittPatt, a company that specializes in facial recognition in still photos and videos

## USB 2.0 DRIVES

Verbatim sent us their 500GB external drive which features an eSATA port along with a USB 2.0 port. The eSATA port gave impressive speeds as expected. But 500 GB with an external power supply seems a bit much.

Seagate sent us three drives: GoFlex Home (1TB), GoFlex Desk (2TB) and GoFlex Pro (500GB). Both the GoFlex Home and GoFlex Pro drives have a similar form factor, but the Pro has a 7200 RPM drive inside it, coming with two connector option. One is the proprietary Seagate connector which allows these drives to be USB 3.0 upgradeable and the other is a stand which has the male joint which fits in the groove of the Seagate drive's base. This of course comes at a premium. The GoFlex Home is the drive which requires an external power supply. It has a sturdy build and comes with a stand to mount the hard drive on.

Western Digital had the My Passport for Mac and My Passport Studio, both 500 GB. My Passport for Mac has a matte black finish and is Time Machine ready. We tested it on the same testbed as the others, as we were primarily interested in the transfer speeds. The My Passport Studio looks interesting thanks to the e-ink display it has on which gives a

memory status bar and allows you to name the hard drive which is visible even on disconnecting the drive. Along with the USB 2.0 interface it also has a FireWire 800 support.

Transcend StoreJet 1 TB drive has a rubberised finish which makes the drive bulky but quite rugged. It has protection from all three sides. Like the ADATA Nobility NH03, the StoreJet also has a one button backup option. Iomega eGo desktop drive was one with a power supply.



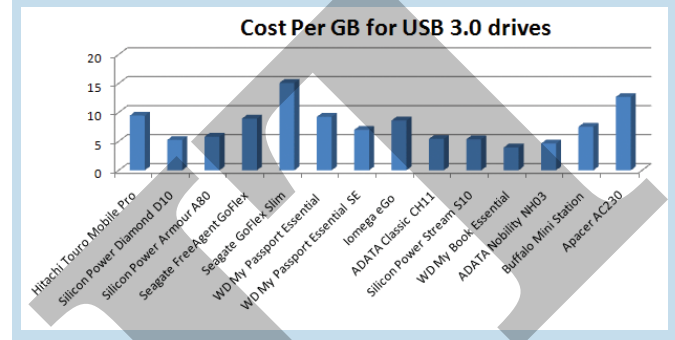
ADATA Nobility NH03

It comes with a stand and is quite bulky in appearance. It also comes with an online backup utility. Buffalo Drive Station is a comparatively less bulky drive and has a lovely black glossy finish. When using TurboCopy here, we did get impressive improvement in data transfer speeds. It comes bundled with all the utilities seen in the Buffalo Mini Station.

Apacer AC203 looks aesthetically very similar to its USB 3.0 cousin - AC230.

## COST PER GIGABYTE

The cost per gigabyte for USB 3.0 drives is not drastically high when compared with the USB 2.0 counterparts. In fact WD My Book Essential 3 TB drive has a cost/GB of ₹3.9 which is just 20 paise higher than the cheapest cost/GB found on the Buffalo Drive station in the USB 2.0 drives category.



ADATA Nobility NH92 has a shiny blue plastic finish with the mini-USB port lodged at one edge. A blue light glows at the other edge when the drive is in operation. It comes with a backup as well as an encryption utility.

## Performance

In the USB 2.0 drives, the performance was plateauing between 25-30 MB/s so it was a very closely fought battle. Only Verbatim's eSATA port gave impressive scores in this category of drives, but with just 500 GB on offer, it's not really much. The intra

drive transfers in the USB 2.0 drives is painfully slow. Seagate GoFlex Pro and Transcend StoreJet were portable drives that gave impressive overall speeds across various test scenarios.

## Winners

**Drives requiring an external power supply:** There were only six drives in this category. ADATA Nobility NH03 won the Best Performer for its high scores across most of the benchmarks. It touched as high as 120MB/s in the Read tests. Best Buy in this segment went to the maximum capacity drive i.e. the WD My Book Essential 3 TB. Not only did this drive give a lower cost per GB at ₹3.9 but it also performed 90 per cent as well as the Best Performer. You can find the table online: [http://bit.ly/digit\\_HDD](http://bit.ly/digit_HDD)

**Portable Drives under than or equal to 750GB:** Silicon Power Diamond D10 drive was awarded as the Best Buy. It was competing against its own cousins the

### Contact sheet

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Hitachi	+91 80 4126 6808	lalit.sudrik@cyberstarindia.com	www.hitachigst.com
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Kingston	NA	Rex_Liang@kingston.com.tw	www.kingston.com
Seagate	011 - 2641 4468	Sales@fortune-it.com	www.seagate.com
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Western Digital	9769955175	anil.kukreja@wdc.com	www.wdc.com
Zipmem	91-120-2460008	marketing@om-nanotech.com	www.om-nanotech.com

## iPerform 3D

Shell out \$19.95 for the iPerform 3D that lets you play the song from any angle, zooming into the action, slowing down and speeding up pace without affecting the pitch of the song

## OCZ Revo Drive 3 x2

Anandtech has done an in-depth preview of this monster 960GB SSD. Check it out at <http://goo.gl/zhi4h>

External HDD

**BEST BUY**  
**digit**  
AUGUST 2011

**BEST BUY**  
**digit**  
AUGUST 2011

**BEST PERFORMER**  
**digit**  
AUGUST 2011

## FLASH DRIVES

	Under 32 GB							32 GB and above			
Brand	Kingston	ADATA	Transcend	Silicon Power	Apacer	ADATA	ZipMem	Kingston	Silicon Power	Apacer	Kingston
<b>Model Name</b>	Data Traveller	Superior S102	JF 700	Luxmini 920	AH 130	Superior S101	-	Data Traveller	Blaze B10	AH 552	Data Traveller 410
<b>Price (₹)</b>	3,500	1,240	1,300	1,050	1,250	560	600	7,599	2,850	5,345	3,379
<b>Capacity</b>	16	16	8	16	8	8	10	64	32	32	32
<b>Cost Per GB (₹)</b>	234.742	84.354	176.630	70.423	167.560	74.468	62.176	127.436	92.293	181.494	112.296
<b>Grand Total (Out Of 100)</b>	64.93	42.77	34.74	26.21	20.58	21.56	19.63	69.55	41.61	81.52	25.37
<b>Specifications</b>											
HDD capacity (unformatted) (GB)	14.91	14.7	7.36	14.91	7.46	7.52	9.65	59.63	30.88	29.45	30.09
Interface	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0	USB 2.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB 2.0
<b>Performance</b>											
HD Tune Pro 4.01											
Average Read (MBps)	82.3	66.7	51.8	30.9	21.8	29.7	18.8	83.1	67.9	121.1	31.1
Access Time (Read, ms)	0.712	0.404	0.511	0.737	0.607	0.664	0.706	0.692	0.428	0.742	0.774
Read Burst Speed (MBps)	46.2	56	45.9	31.2	23.8	20.8	19.8	46.8	55.8	69.3	31.8
CPU Usage (In %)	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.9	1.3	1.5	1.4	2	1.5	2.4	1.8
Random Access (Read 1 MB)											
Operations per sec (IOPS)	76	64	50	30	22	23	18	77	65	107	29
Average Access Time (ms)	13.04	15.4	19.76	32.42	45.16	42.66	52.65	12.95	15.24	9.33	33.53
SiSoft Sandra 2010											
Drive Index, Read (MBps)	84.33	66.65	51.75	30.26	22	23.67	18.85	85.63	67.87	116.7	31.2
Access Time, read (microsecs)	695	94	101	190	107	42	180	688	256	474	337
<b>Real World Tests (Higher is better)</b>											
File Write 4 GB Single File (MB/s)	62.77	19.41	14.37	16.71	9.52	8.69	12.88	48.76	20.68	71.17	18.81
File Write Test Assorted 4 GB File (MB/s)	39.38	8.25	7.08	13.17	6.81	5.12	9.66	53.19	6.18	42.3	9.86
Read Test Single 4 GB File (MB/s)	83.03	65.01	50.19	31.03	22.61	21.67	18.78	84.34	66.06	115.51	31.03
Read Test Assorted 4 GB File (MB/s)	72.68	61.13	48.76	29.46	21.78	20.96	18.7	74.47	62.06	100.98	29.92

We decided to call in for pen drives which were 8 GB and above as anything below that just does not cut it with us. Here too we got a lot of participating USB 3.0 drives. There were lots of interesting form factors on display here. The bulky rugged Kingston Data Traveller Ultimate drives to the tiny Apacer AH

130 which is almost inconspicuous if it weren't for the bright orange colour. Silicon Power Blaze B10 has a heat resistant paint on its outer cover, which changes colour when the drive heats up. Kingston Data Traveller 410 has an interesting swivel design along with the classy rubberised finish on the drive.

Stream S10 and Armor A80 but the Diamond D10 had the lowest cost per GB amongst them all. We also awarded the Editor's Pick to Hitachi Touro Mobile Pro for its superlative performance in this segment. It gave a performance that was 90 per cent that of the Best Performer. It also has an additional cloud storage option which gave it an edge over the others.

**Portable Drives over 750GB:** The ADATA Classic

CH11 won the Best Buy here thanks to its lower cost per GB. Seagate GoFlex 1.5TB drive performed better but lost out on the pricing.

**Flash Drives of capacity 32GB and over:** Apacer AH 552 won the Best Performer across all the pen drives that we got. It gave impressive scores of over 100 MB/s for read tests. Kingston Data Traveller 64GB drive won the Best Buy for its superior price to performance ratio as com-

pared to the other two drives. If you are not looking at best performance for your price, the Silicon Power Blaze B10 makes for an economical buy.

**Flash drives under 32 GB:** ADATA Superior S102 won the Best Buy in the under 32GB flash drive category for its good performance and comparatively cheaper cost per GB.

## Final Words

The mere fact that all the awards were swept by USB 3.0

drives points to an important conclusion - investing in a USB 2.0 drive now is pointless. Of course the prices will keep dropping, but as was seen above, the price per GB difference between the USB 2.0 drives and USB 3.0 drives was not very high. The fact that USB 3.0 drives are backward compatible with USB 2.0 ports means that you can future proof your investment if you do not have a USB 3 drive on your board just yet. **Q**