

## Review: FireKing MediaVault HD provides strong data protection

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The [FireKing MediaVault HD](#) is targeted to businesses that are storing their files electronically. But it's also a useful device for those of us who have a plethora of digital media – much of its “homemade” – who need to ensure its safety as much as possible. Pricing starts around US\$750 for the 250GB version.

Back-ups are great (and if you're not backing up, you're asking for trouble). But even if you back up your computer records and files, they could be lost to fire. That's where the FireKing MediaVault HD comes in. It's available with one or two 250GB external hard drives in their own fireproof container. The MediaVault HD is specially designed to automatically backup and protect your valuable data from the fire.

It also comes with a lock and is pretty darned heavy (around 55 pounds) so it also acts as a theft deterrent. The MediaVault product is also water resistant, which is not the same as waterproof. In the event of a fire, the MVHD is designed to be resistant to water from the use of sprinklers and fire hoses.

The hard drive is compatible with any Mac or PC, but unfortunately, the software is Windows only (though the drives work just fine with Apple's Time Machine software). The MediaVault HD product consists of two major items: the MVHD fireproof container and one or two Seagate 250 GB hard drives. Two four-foot twin-lead USB cables and security keys are also provided.

Set-up is very simple. Here are the steps:

- Open the MVHD lid. Connect your first hard drive to the interior USB cable marked “A.” Slide the hard drive into the foam slot closest to the rear of the MVHD.
- Connect the second hard drive (if you have one) to the interior USB cable marked “B,” then slide it into the second foam slot. For maximum protection, close and lock the MVHD.

Place your MVDH such that the rear of the MVHD is within four feet of available USB ports on your Mac. Connect one external USB cable between your computer and the MVHD rear port A. A blue light should light up on the end of the hard drive connected to internal USB cable A. Your computer should automatically detect the new drive within several seconds and make it available for use. Follow the same steps for the second drive. If you choose to push data to the MVHD from more than one LAN node, you may access both drives simultaneously.

Once proper electrical operation is verified (your computer finds and assigns drive letters for each new hard drive), you should close and lock the lid to your MVHD for full protection. It will operate with the lid open, but that sort of defeats the purpose.

### Contributor



#### Dennis Sellers

Dennis has been a newspaper editor/reporter (seven years) and teacher (seven years). He has over 4,000 magazine, newspaper

and online articles to his credit. He has also covered the Mac and tech industries for over a decade for such online publications as MacCentral, MacMinute and now MacsimumNews.

The “twin-lead” USB cable that comes with the MVHD is a four foot 24 AWG cable. The Mini-B plug connects to the MVHD rear panel. The standard USB plug is used for data and power and it connects to your computer. The pass-through USB pigtail connector is an Auxiliary Power input that’s only required to be connected to another USB port on your computer if the computer doesn’t supply sufficient power to operate the external hard drive through the main USB connection.

You can use the MVHD as your sole backup source or (as I do) to back up other hard drives (in my case, my Time Capsule). It’s designed to run all the time. The folks at MediaVault say that the MVHD is designed so that even under maximum hard drive loading, the system will operate within acceptable temperature limits.

The MediaVault may or may not work with a USB hub. It wouldn’t work with mine, but I have a plethora of devices attached. Many USB hubs won’t provide adequate power to the hard drives, so it’s recommended that the hard drives be connected directly to the USB ports on your computer.

In some cases you can use your own hard drives in the MVHD, but not always. The MediaVault device can accept a wide range of 2.5-inch external drives meeting the USB 2.0 specification. However, some USB 2.0 drives require excessive power and may not function properly when connected.

If you’ve really got a lot of data you can have multiple MVHD’s hooked up to your computer. However, you can’t “daisy chain” them. In other words, you can’t connect them to each other.



Also note that the MVHD was designed to be a “stand-alone” unit. However, provided that the integrity of the exterior cables of the MVHD isn’t compromised, the unit can be placed inside of a file cabinet.

As mentioned, I don’t like the fact that the MVHD doesn’t come with Mac backup software. I also wish it had FireWire connectivity (unlike Apple, it seems, I’m still a big fan). Also, the MediaVault device isn’t much to look at, but it’s built for protection, not looks.

If you have a lot of valuable data in your home, home office or business, the MVHD could prove to be a life saver. If you don’t spring for a device like this, I’d suggest investigating online storage options or, at the least, backing up your files on a hard drive that you carry with you when you’re away or that can be left in a secure location.

Macsimum rating: 8 out of 10

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