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## Seagate preps hard-disk encryption technology

It will protect data if notebook PC is stolen, company says

News Story by Paul Kallender

JUNE 21, 2005 (IDG NEWS SERVICE) - TOKYO -- Seagate Technology LLC will start shipping next year a security technology for some of its hard disk drives that will make it more difficult for notebook PC thieves to read stolen data, the company said today.

The technology, called hardware-based, full-disk encryption (FDE), automatically encrypts all the data written to the drive, according to Mark Pastor, strategic marketing senior director at Scotts Valley, Calif.-based Seagate.

"Before data gets placed on the media, it goes through the encryption. ... If you steal the drive and are a lab that specializes in retrieving data on the media, it doesn't matter. When you get the data off, it's gibberish," he said.

The encryption is Triple DES (Data Encryption Standard), a widely used standard, he said.

The company is initially offering the FDE technology as an option on its upcoming range of 2.5-in. Momentus 5400-series drives. These drives will start shipping in the first half of next year and are designed for notebook PCs, Pastor said.

"Notebook PCs have two key attributes: They are used by a lot of business travelers, and they are easily lost or stolen. Protecting notebooks is our first priority," he said.

The technology will be available for notebook PC makers on 40GB, 80GB and 120GB versions of the Momentus 5400-series drives, which will have a speed of 5,400 rpm and use the Ultra ATA-100 interface.

The hard disk drives with the encryption technology will have exactly the same performance as the drives in the series that don't use the technology. But the drives with the security feature will be more expensive, Pastor said. Pricing for the drives wasn't available.

Seagate estimates that about 10% of the Momentus 5400 series could be shipped with the security technology. If the feature catches on, the company will extend the option to a broader range of disks, he said.

In addition to offering the FDE technology, Seagate will offer software tools to enable customers to add their own security features to work with Seagate's technology. For example, users will be able to add biometric systems such as fingerprint scanners, Pastor said.