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Secure it Easy

REVIEW DATE: 03.13.07

Editor's Rating: ●●○○○

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By [Neil J. Rubenking](#)

Like Safend Personal Protector and AntiCopy Personal Edition, Secure it Easy aims to stop podslurping—unauthorized copying of sensitive data to Apple iPods or other USB-connected storage devices. It's a lot slicker and easier to use than Safend, though it also has some quirks. Unfortunately, it doesn't control devices connected via FireWire or PCMCIA, and it's not a freebie like Safend. In fact, it costs more than DeviceLock, which offers more complete protection than any of the other three.

SIE blocks access for all USB storage devices except those an administrator has marked as trusted. On install, it prompts you to examine the list of devices currently connected and put a check mark on any that should be trusted. By default, the user of an untrusted device gets a warning that SIE has blocked access, but you can turn that off—maybe you want to block Mata Hari's attempted data theft without explaining it to her. You can even choose to e-mail a notification every time an untrusted device connects or disconnects. I wish the disconnect notification could be turned off—what's the point?

SLIDESHOW (10)



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SIE displays a list of all the USB storage devices it has ever recognized, something you don't get in Safend. Trusted devices have a check mark; connected devices have a red or green icon depending on whether or not they're trusted. To make a new device trusted, click Refresh List to make sure it's visible, check its box, and click Apply Changes. Only an administrator can do that, however, and you can further limit access by password-protecting the settings console.

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To exercise the program, I turned out my drawer of random USB keys and started plugging away. SIE correctly blocked all the unknowns and e-mailed warnings. I did find that if I clicked Refresh List or Apply Changes at the wrong time, I'd suddenly lose all or part of the list. Clicking Refresh List after a short wait brought the list back, but its

disappearance was a bit alarming. In several cases Vista popped up a notice after a device was blocked, reporting a problem and asking if I wanted to check the device's status. That didn't happen with any of the other three products, but then, they don't run under Vista.

I have a pair of identical USB keys that are old enough to have no serial number. Safend didn't distinguish them; approving one approved both, and blocking one blocked both. AntiCopy distinguished them only if I gave them different Volume Labels. And DeviceLock, noting the absence of a serial number, offered to whitelist the device type but not individual devices. By contrast, SIE seemed to see a difference. With both of them plugged in, I could set one as trusted and the other as untrusted. It turns out, however, that SIE is using an internal Windows ID that changes depending on which port the device is using. If a trusted device has no serial number, moving it to another port will make it untrusted. An identical device in the same port will be trusted. Fortunately, it's uncommon to find a device with no serial number—modern ones all have them—and even rarer to find two that are otherwise identical.

The user interface is spiffy looking, but has some rough edges. If you fill in all the blanks on the E-Mail Notification tab but then switch to another tab without clicking Apply Changes, all your data vanishes. Like DeviceLock it logs all connect and disconnect events, but there's no way to limit the log's size or discard antiquated entries. A number of times I found that clicking Apply Changes to change the trusted/untrusted status of various devices just didn't work. CoSoSys confirmed that this can happen when you try to change multiple devices at once. There's no context-sensitive help; actually, there's no help system at all, just a PDF-format manual.

Secure it Easy is a friendlier solution to end-point security than Safend Personal Protector. The full list of devices and notification via e-mail are nice features. But SIE controls only USB devices, whereas Safend also manages devices connected through FireWire and PCMCIA. Neither can stop a data thief armed with removable media such as diskettes, digital media cards, or writable CD/DVDs the way DeviceLock can. This limited protection is okay in a free product like Safend, but I can't see paying for it—and certainly not paying 45 bucks.

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