



www.idrive.com

Backup Review Rating



(4 stars out of possible 5)

Reviewed on July 27, 2008

Summary

IDrive, is a service offered by Pro Softnet Corporation, an ASP and Internet Solutions Provider, based in Woodland Hills, CA.

IDrive offers 2GB of free online backup space to its clients with every subscription. For this free 2GB offer, there are no backup and restore restrictions or bandwidth limits or restrictions on file type. The backups are automated, with remote backups of files/folders and IDrive boasts of world-class infrastructure for the data centers and advanced data encryption.

IDrive is one of a handful companies that also provide online backup service for Mac. This review does not include their Mac offering.

IDrive requires a minimum system configuration which it specifies on its website and at the time of product download/purchase and installation. It requires Microsoft Windows 2000 (Service pack 4), Windows 2000 Advanced Server, Windows 2003 Server, Windows XP Home/Professional, Windows Vista, and Windows Home Server. Internet Explorer 6 must be installed. The software also requires above 512 MB RAM, 10 MB Free Hard Disk space for installed program, 20 MB or more recommended for local caching.

IDrive comes in two flavors—Basic and Pro. IDrive Basic allows users a 2GB of online backup space absolutely free for storing photos, media files or other important documents. This service is comparable to services offered by the competition. This option is considered best for individuals and families. Users have the option to upgrade to the IDrive Pro version depending on their needs.

IDrive Pro is considered to be ideal for small businesses or individuals with very large online backup needs offering 150 GB of storage space for backups, for a small fee of USD 4.95/month or USD 49.50/year. With IDrive, Pro users can create and manage multiple accounts for small Businesses. As a matter of caution, IDrive encourages users to upgrade to one of the higher storage plans if their usage exceeds the opted plan to avoid the overuse charges since for usage beyond the opted plan for business plans, there may be an overuse charge at the rate of USD 0.50/GB/Month.

The advantages of IDrive are:

- ❑ Files can be accessed anywhere, anytime.
- ❑ Convenient, elegant and organized
- ❑ Installation and ease-of-use on multiple systems
- ❑ Encrypted backups for maximum data security/privacy
- ❑ Retains 30 individual versions of backed up data
- ❑ Drag-and-drop restore is possible using the optional IDrive Explorer interface in addition to IDrive Classic options to backup and restore.

IDrive provides optional encryption of data on storage with a user defined key known only to the user and no one else. It uses a 128 Bit SSL encryption during transmission and a 256 Bit encryption during storage.

IDrive offers a fully functional trial account to users with 2GB of online backup space absolutely free. This 2GB free account is available in *Windows and Mac* versions. A new version of the software for windows was released recently. The *IDrive for Mac version* sports the same ease of use and efficiency features as in the Windows platform. Pricing for the Mac service remains same as for the Windows, starting at \$4.95/month for 150GB of storage for personal use.

The highlights of the IDrive is its user friendly GUI and ease of operation. It effectively uses Internet bandwidth and uploads data in compressed format during transmission. Incremental backups quicken the process of regular backup and versioning features allow you to store up to 30 versions of documents, while storage space is calculated on the latest version of the document. Mapped drives can also be backed up even when the system is in a log off mode. The open file backup feature that is available for Windows Vista, Windows XP and Windows 2003 Server is unique to this application. IDrive backup or restore operation can be set up from behind HTTP/SCOKS proxy servers and the local computers contents can be synchronized with that of the IDrive account. The robust search feature enables a quick search and retrieval.

Support for the software is available over email and telephone. Users can also download the user manual, which is very detailed and also view the online demo. FAQs posted on the site also provide answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Company Information

CEO: Raghu Kulkarni

Employees: 20 (in the USA)

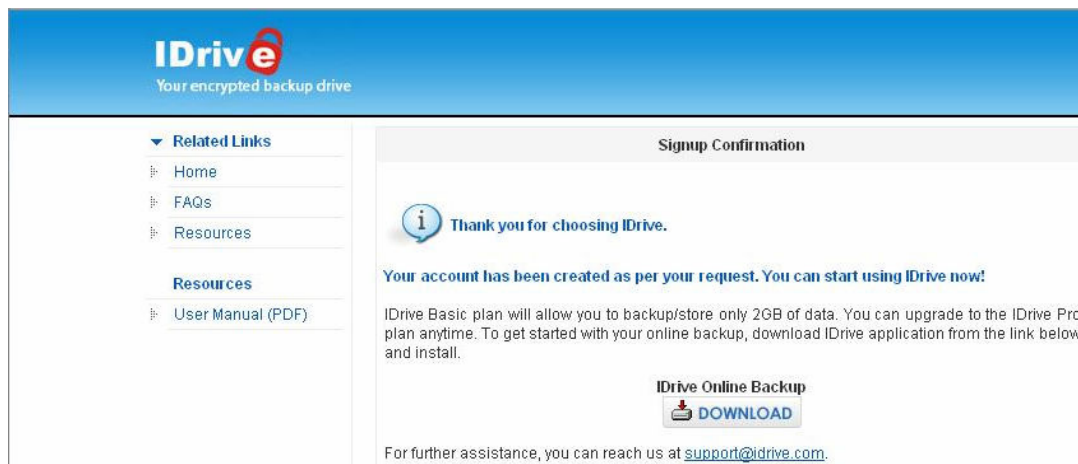
Funding: Self-funded and profitable

Revenues: \$8.3 Million (2007) for Pro-Softnet (Parent company); unknown for IDrive

Positioning: Provides secure online backup services to individuals, small and medium sized businesses.

Getting started with IDrive

Sign up for a free account is fairly simple. To sign up, IDrive asks for your name, email and password and asks you to choose the platform – Windows or Mac. Then you hit the ‘Sign up for a free account’ button. The sign up is confirmed through the screen below and you are allowed to download the IDrive Basic.



Once you click the download button, the ‘exe’ file of 8.43MB downloads within a minute. Installation is also simple process explained below:



Shown above is the screen, which appears when you start to install IDrive and as is usually the case with any software installation, the user has to but accept the agreement to proceed with the installation as shown in the screen below:



Like most other programs, IDrive gives you an option to choose the drive where you want the program to reside or you can just click the 'Next' button to store the program in its default location, the C drive.



The installation took less than a minute and you can complete the installation by clicking the 'Finish' button.

IDrive Product Demo

IDrive offers product demo with two options to the user – the IDrive Classic and the IDrive Explorer.

IDrive Classic boasts of a user interface similar to the Microsoft Windows Explorer, which makes the job of selecting files and folders for backup and restore easier.

The IDrive Explorer on the other hand provides a 'read –only' virtual view of the backed up files for access and restore with a user interface similar to Windows Explorer, providing additional interface to restore your data with its drag-n-drop functionality.

In simple terms, IDrive Classic does both backups up and restores; and IDrive Explorer is for restores only.

Features

Automatic Selection

One of the unique features of IDrive is when you install IDrive for the first time, a default selection of most commonly backed up data including Documents, Pictures and Videos is created with a random after-hours schedule. You can customize the selection and schedule.

Sync option/ True Archiving

Sync option enables you to sync desktop to your account and remove redundant data. But you control this; no data is deleted from your account until you manually delete or run Sync. Thus, the user has the authority to decide what they want to delete. IDrive does true archiving.

Search and restore

IDrive does fast search and restore of your data from your desktop or the web client.

Data protection

IDrive automatically recognizes the modified parts of file(s)/folder(s) and backs them up every 10 minutes, thus offering hands-free backup of data.

Security features

The most important feature that a user is concerned with, when it come to data backup services is the security of his data, the ease with which he can backup and restore his data. In the case of IDrive, all the data and user authentication information is transmitted over Internet and *stored in encrypted form*.

As the data is stored in encrypted form, the security of your data is ensured. During installation, you are given a choice to have the system choose the encryption key or enter a private encryption key (known only to you). IDrive recommends the users to choose their own private encryption key option since only the system-based encryption keys are stored on IDrive servers, not the users' private encryption key.

In a way, this adds one more level of security to the users' data since the private encryption keys ensure that even IDrive personnel cannot access your confidential and sensitive data. The flip side of it is that if in the unfortunate event of losing your private encryption key, nobody can help you. Users need to be extra cautious not to lose their private encryption key.

Physical Security

The IDrive application is hosted at its Data Center in the United States which provides the physical environment necessary to keep the servers up and running 24 X 7 with custom designed with raised floors, HVAC temperature control systems with separate cooling zones and seismically braced racks, state-of-the-art smoke detection and fire suppression systems, motion sensors, 24 X 7 secured access, video camera surveillance and security breach alarms.

Backups of backups

User data resides on raid protected industry leading storage devices with multiple levels of redundancy. In addition, data is continuously mirrored onto another set of devices for additional security. IDrive provides for concurrent read-only access of data.

However, IDrive prevents concurrent updates or backups on a user account from the client interface to insure the integrity of user data. If you delete a file in your system, IDrive does not delete it automatically from its server. Some other online backup providers delete files from their servers after 30 days of you deleting them.

Pricing

The pricing structure of IDrive's backup services is displayed below:

IDrive Pro for Personal Use

| Storage Space | Monthly Rate | Yearly Rate |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| 150 GB* | USD 4.95 | USD 49.50 |

IDrive Pro for Business

| Storage Space | Monthly Rate | Yearly Rate |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| 50 GB | USD 9.95 | USD 99.50 |
| 100 GB | USD 19.95 | USD 199.50 |
| 500 GB | USD 49.95 | USD 499.50 |

It can be seen from the above table that the rates for Business are comparatively higher than those for the Personal Use. The yearly rates, in both cases, Personal and Business, work out to be lesser.

For instance, assuming that you go for 50 GB Storage space, the monthly rate would be USD 9.95. If you opt to pay monthly, the amount you pay is about USD 120. Whereas, if you go for the Yearly Rate, then you will be paying just under USD 100, which is a saving of 16%.

Support Mechanism

The support mechanism of IDrive offers help on both telephone and email. Users can also use the "Send Error Report" feature built-in with the IDrive classic interface to report any application related issues, available on the IDrive tray icon (see figure below). Live chat is also just a click away.

Technical Support Request/Feedback Form

Email

Contact Phone Number

IDrive Program Used
 IDrive Version 2.2.0

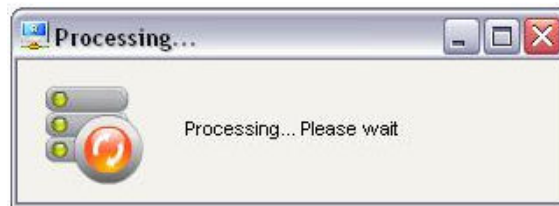
User Name

Operating system
 Microsoft Windows XP

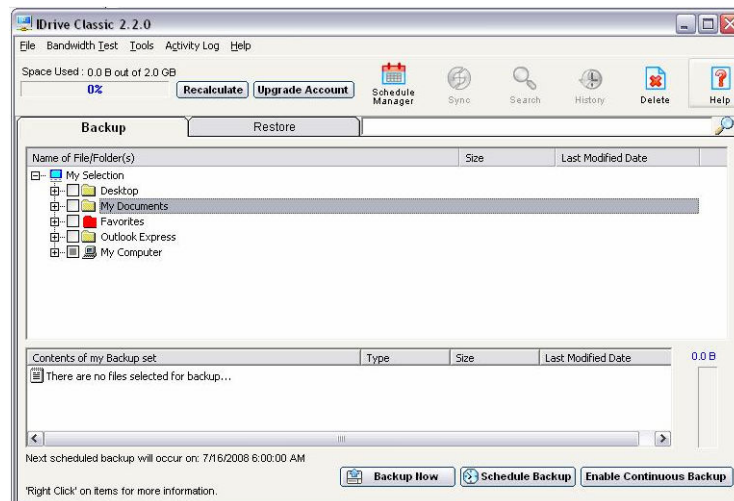
Description of the Problem/Questions/Comments

Report to Tech Support

Backup process



The backup process starts with the processing screen as shown above and is soon replaced with the following screen:



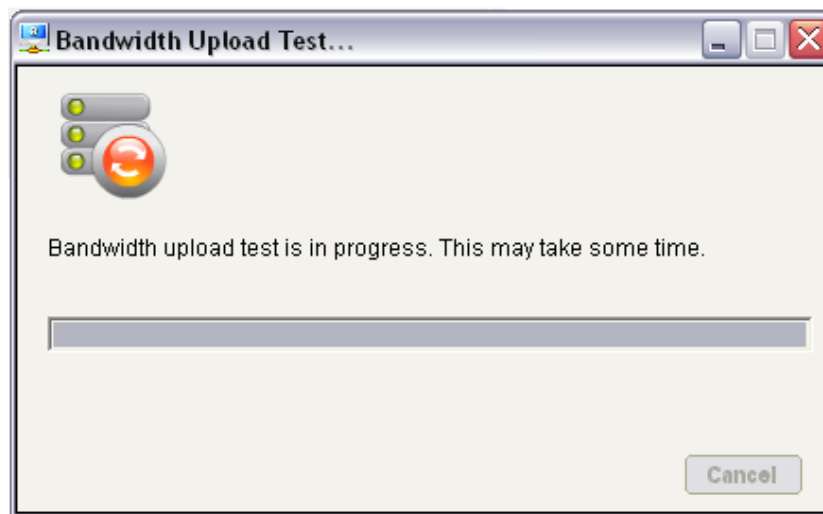
The files or folders you need to backup can be selected. After selecting, if you wish to exclude a file from the backup set, you can do so by right clicking and selecting the option, 'Exclude this folder from being a part of the backup list' (See figure below).



Once you are through, the 'Backup Now' button needs to be clicked and the backup starts. The time taken for backup depends on various factors, such as the file size, the speed of your Internet connection, etc.

Bandwidth Test

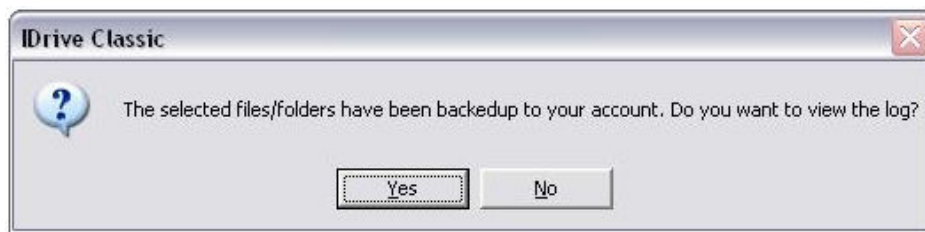
IDrive also has an option in the main menu to know the download or upload speed. The Bandwidth test menu allows the user to test the upload or download speed. On clicking the 'Upload Speed' submenu the following window appears



Then, a window showing the upload speed gets displayed. The speed depends on your Internet connection. A similar process is available for ascertaining the download speed.

However there is a drawback. If you wish to stop the upload test midway, for paucity of time, then you cannot. There is no option to the user to stop the bandwidth test midway. This, we feel is a drawback since depending on the speed of the connection, the time taken for the test may vary. Forcing the user to sit through the test is unnecessary. During the process of backup, a window displays the status of transfer. If needed, one can pause the transfer of data and resume later.

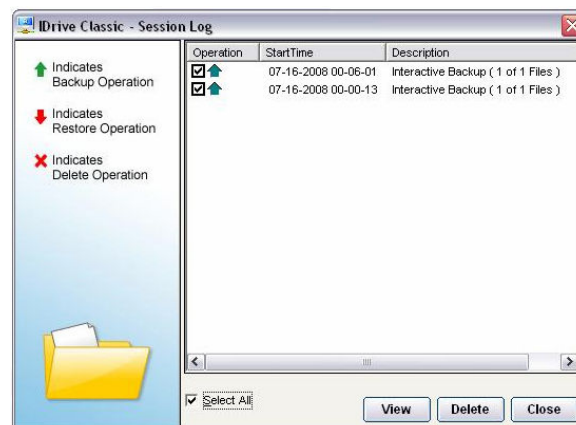
After the backup is completed, IDrive informs the user that the selected files have been backed up and asks whether the user would want to view the log (See figure below).



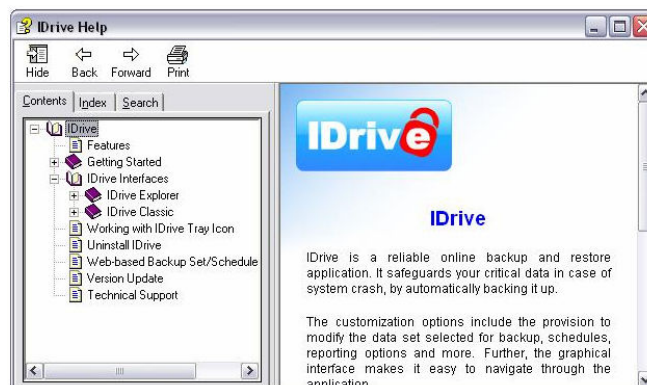
In case you hit the 'Yes' button, the log file will be displayed in Notepad.

Our Internet connection, as tested on <http://www.speedtest.net/>, shows an upload speed of 488 kb/s and a download speed of 4,888 kb/s, as provided by our ISP, a cable company. It took 40 minutes (based on ISP's theoretical upload speed, it should have taken about 30 minutes) to upload our approximately 100 MB of files. It took 5 minutes (based on ISP's theoretical download speed, it should have taken only 3 minutes) to restore. But, keep in mind that, it is impossible to get the full capacity of your Internet connection while backing up and restoring. If you manage to obtain 50% of your bandwidth utilization, it is considered fairly acceptable. IDrive's backup and restore speeds of data transfer as tested above, however, are very good compared to other providers.

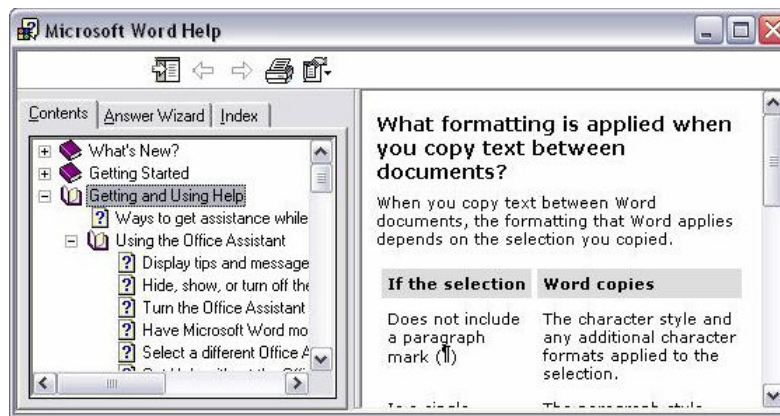
The sessions log option available in the menu also confirms this as shown below:



Help

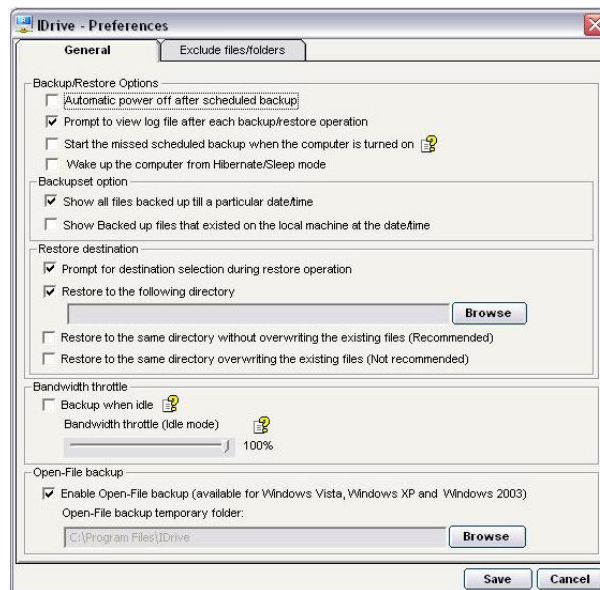


The IDrive Help is similar to Help on MS Word and this similarity makes the user comfortable since users may not have difficulty in finding the information they want easily, like here:



Preferences

IDrive's Preferences feature allows the user a lot of options such as choosing the destination of the Restore, Open File backup, setting the bandwidth throttle etc.



Promotion

IDrive also promotes its programs through referrals (see screen below) from your friends, of course subject to the certain conditions and you get 10 GB free online storage space.

Refer Friends - Get 10GB Free!

It is simple. Just share the benefits of IDrive Online Backup solution with **your contacts*** and get 10GB free online storage space. IDrive does not store your contacts information and will not send out any other promotional material other than this one time referral email.

Refer contacts from your e-mail service providers

We support email id referrals from major email systems.
(IDrive system does not store authentication information anywhere)

Your E-mail :

Password :

[Outlook Users Click Here](#)

IDrive Partner Program

IDrive also has The IDrive Partner Program, which allows IT Solution Providers, Hosting Solutions Providers, Storage Solutions Providers, Disaster, Recovery Specialists, Software Vendors, Data Centers etc as authorized resellers of IDrive's products and services to profit from their recommendations of their online storage and recovery solutions.

The intro page says, “We welcome companies providing the highest standards in customer service and solutions to join”. The invitation by itself is a statement since it sets in clear terms the conditions necessary to partner with IDrive, namely, “companies providing the highest standards in customer service and solutions”, which establishes the IDrive’s commitment to customer service.

Conclusion

To sum up, IDrive is comparable to any other back up service provider. IDrive is being promoted aggressively, especially, in blogs; as a result, it has become one of the household names in the online backup industry. IDrive’s website is also optimized for search engines. Though IDrive doesn’t offer an unlimited backup, its prices are very competitive. We highly recommend IDrive.

IDrive’s strength lies in these areas:

- Simplicity of its interface (which makes the user feel comfortable)
- Very competitive price
- Its efforts to ensure security of user data, such as encrypted backups for maximum data security/privacy
- Creation and Backup Management of Multiple accounts via Web
- Access of Backup/Restore log information from web
- Free Telephone support
- Quick Search and restore option for any file or folder, etc.

All of these items need to be considered when deciding an online backup solution.
