

# PINGS & PACKETS



FormatX offers a simple interface for formatting worksheet elements.

## DATA FORMATTING

### FormatX automates the look of files

ALTHOUGH IT IS EASY TO GET DATA into Microsoft Excel, making the data presentable is more of a challenge. FormatX, from Cherniak Software, solves that problem by automatically formatting CSV data in Excel.

I like the \$50 software for a few reasons but mainly because it eliminates the need to manually adjust column widths. FormatX runs as a macro in Excel and has a simple interface for customizing settings such as font selection and header and footer choices. The product doesn't eliminate the need for a product like Crystal Reports, but for \$50, I could at least still manipulate the data I was trying to present.

FormatX can format one file at a time or can function in batch mode. It operates on a few simple assumptions based on the last data cell in the first data row, the last row in the first column of data, and the number of lines after the body data in a text or XLS file.

The product will pay for itself

pretty quickly for users who spend any time at all formatting data. But FormatX's price is still high, given its focus on doing one thing and the going rate for simple trialware and shareware utilities.

A free download is available at [www.cherniaksoftware.com/formatx](http://www.cherniaksoftware.com/formatx). —*Michael Caton*

## HARD DRIVES

### DataVault 3DX travels well

OLIXIR TECHNOLOGIES' SHOCK-protected Mobile DataVault 3DX hard drive works well as a mobile backup device and can handle some minor travel bumps. The Mobile DataVault 3DX's impact-resistant case can withstand short drops (up to 18 inches).

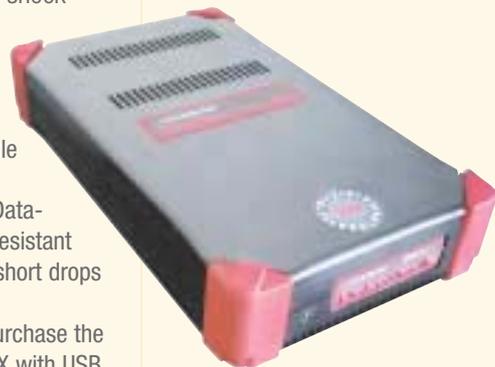
Customers can purchase the Mobile DataVault 3DX with USB 2.0 or FireWire connectivity. The Mobile DataVault 3DX has a starting price of \$249 for an 80GB drive, and prices range up to \$569 for a 250GB version.

The Mobile DataVault 3DX has an external connector to hook to either FireWire or USB 2.0, but we would have preferred that the company have both of these interfaces built into the case. This would have

allowed us to connect to either port on the fly without changing the adapter and given us one less thing to drag around on the road.

Dantz Development's Retrospect Express Backup software (versions are available for Macs and PCs) is bundled with the Mobile DataVault 3DX, giving users everything they need to start backing up data.

Installation of the drive and



Olixir's Mobile DataVault 3DX is a semitough backup device for mobile professionals.

the software was fairly simple in my tests, and backup and restore jobs were quick and easy using the Retrospect Express software.

The Mobile DataVault 3DX is available now, and more information can be found at [www.olixir.com](http://www.olixir.com). —*Henry Baltazar*

## NETWORK MONITORS

### Neon Software's LANsurveyor 8.0 stays ahead of network changes

VERSION 8.0 OF NEON SOFTWARE'S LANSURVEYOR makes quick work of documenting small and midsize networks, and it also scans for changes.

In my tests, LANsurveyor highlighted network changes, making it easy for me to see new devices such as wireless access points and new computers.

Although change/add/move reports are handy in their own right, Neon Software is touting the new scanning and reporting feature as a security enhancement. I suppose it is, but IT managers in small and midsize shops will likely find it more

useful if they use continuous scans to keep track of equipment moving onto and off of the network.

I liked the way LANsurveyor diagrammed my test network. I have a fairly broad range of equipment, including a ZyXel ZyWall 100 firewall, which LANsurveyor quickly identified. It even added equipment to my network map with the appropriate logo.

LANsurveyor also had no trouble mapping my managed switches, including a collection of Cisco Catalyst 2900 XL and 3550s.

LANsurveyor Enterprise Edition includes a continuous-scan option (\$249 for LANsurveyor Workgroup and Management Station editions, or \$149 if purchased before Jan. 31) and is available now. Go to [www.neon.com](http://www.neon.com) for more information.

—*Cameron Sturdevant*