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Review: iMate ADB-USB converter

by Daniel Chvatik, dchvatik@atpm.com

Company: Griffin Technology
Web: <http://www.griffintechology.com/imac/imate.html>
Driver: http://www.griffintechology.com/imac/imate_driver.html



(required with dongles and devices that need special drivers)

Distributor: <http://www.dr Bott.com/prod/iMate.html>

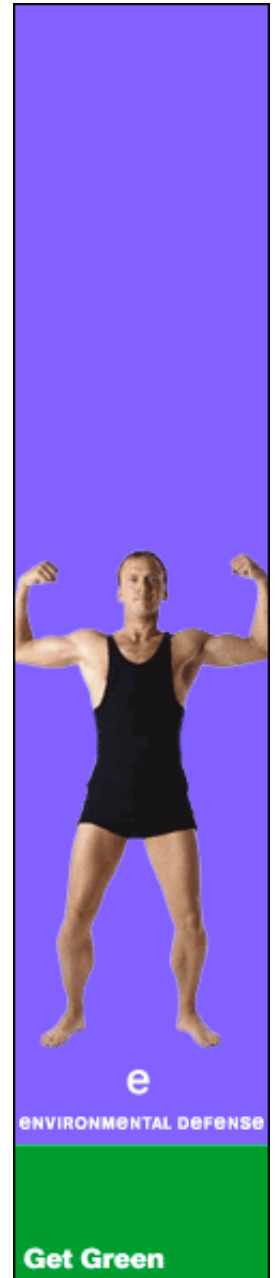
Requirements: A USB-capable computer (iMac, G3, G4, bronze PB or older Mac with USB card—though those probably have ADB anyway)

Price: \$39

USB (Universal Serial Bus, the standard on all new Macs) might be a great technology, but it doesn't do you any good if you are stuck with lots of legacy devices that you cannot connect to your new computer. ADB, or Apple Desktop Bus, the interface standard Apple employed before USB came along, was used to connect mice, trackballs, trackpads, keyboards, graphics tablets, joysticks, game pads, AppleVision displays, and dongles to older Macs. If you needed to use any of those older devices on a new Mac without ADB, you were left high and dry—until Griffin Technologies released the iMate.



The iMate is an ADB-USB converter, meaning it allows your older ADB devices to talk to the new USB interface. Sometimes it might just be convenient to use your nice old 3-button mouse, but in some cases it is even essential because you use a piece of software that is copy protected by a dongle. A dongle is a little piece of hardware that usually connects through the ADB port and allows you to run software when it is connected that otherwise would refuse to run. This method was used to deter illegal copying of very rare and expensive software. Unfortunately, this means you cannot run that software on a newer Mac, unless you use the iMate.



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The iMate itself is a small piece of hardware in stylish translucent bondi-blue that connects to your USB port and features a single ADB port for your legacy equipment. The iMate comes with no software, and you won't need any additional drivers to connect a simple mouse or keyboard. The Mac can handle those with no problem. If you want to connect a device that needs its own driver or a dongle, you need to get the iMate USB driver from Griffin's Web site.

The iMate sports an activity LED that lets you see what's going on. Griffin also offers the iMate Fiddler (at same location mentioned above), a program that lets you play with the iMate driver settings, like ADB polling speeds. Those settings shouldn't be messed with unless you are experiencing problems and know what you're doing.

While the iMate is not very exciting in itself, it provides an invaluable service to those that need to connect older ADB devices for various reasons. One iMate supports multiple ADB devices (if you chain them together). It also supports keyboard soft power on and off (i.e. using the power key on the ADB keyboards). In contrast to many converters, the iMate is small and not intrusive. It is a must for everyone who needs to protect an extensive investment in ADB technology.

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November 29, 2001 - 20:44 EST

Help!! I've acquired an Apple Workgroup 60 server that I'm using as a desktop. I need to connect an HP 930c with a USB port. However, the Apple doesn't have a USB port. The printer port is entirely different. Is the ADB-USB what I need or is there another type of adapter for this configuration. Thanks. Del

[Lee Bennett \(ATPM Staff\)](#) November 30, 2001 - 00:33 EST

Del, a USB adapter is, indeed, what you want, but not this one. This review is about an ADB to USB adapter. The legacy ADB