

FireWire is basically a way to connect *things* to a computer. By *things* we mean *peripherals*, and by *peripherals*, we mean digital cameras, external hard drives, printers, MP3 players, and such. FireWire supports Plug-and-Play and hot swapping, making it relatively simply to connect and use any device instantly. FireWire is also handy for connecting devices directly to each other, such as a hooking up a digital camera to a printer. Among the advantages offered by FireWire are the fast speed at which it can transfer data, and its ability to deliver power to any device it's connecting. FireWire is brought to you by Apple.

Technical Advantages of FireWire

FireWire is a very fast data transfer technology. FireWire 400 can transfer data at 400 megabits per second, and FireWire 800 is capable of transferring at 800 mbps. In comparison, the similar USB technology transfers, at it's best, 480 mbps.

Most FireWire implementations are able to supply power to the devices connected, eliminating the need for an external power supply. When you plug your digital camera into your computer with a FireWire, you won't be draining your battery. You can also charge your iPod by plugging it into your computer with a FireWire.

We say "most", because some manufacturers, for example Sony, produce cables that do not supply power.

Plug and who? Hot what?

FireWire supports plug-and-play and hot swapping of peripheral devices. Plug-and-play and hot swapping are catchy names for technologies that allow you to connect a device to a computer and use it instantly, without doing any technical configuration. Devices can be connected and disconnected while the computer is turned on, and no rebooting is required.

FireWire cables are used for lots of peripherals now days. Many Computers and laptops now have firewire ports of all kinds.

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