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Open, Sesame!
Brando

Brando's Stysen E08: RFID, the Modern 'Open, Sesame!'

If stolen, it would appear as a virgin, unformatted disk

Preventing unauthorized users from accessing the data on a hard-disk drive is one of the oldest preoccupations in the IT industry. Data security has become more and more important since the mobile computers started kicking in.

It was pretty far-fetched to be afraid that someone would break into your office and steal your desktop PC's hard drive. However, mobile computers are easy to lose or even to get stolen, which would expose their contents to any tech-savvy guy that can bypass a simple password.

Rather than remembering some keywords that won't resist too much to a brute-force attack, you can use one of the hard-drives that come enabled with a RFID activator. Brando has released a new 2.5-inch hard-drive enclosure, the Stysen E08, designed to keep important data out of the prying eyes.

The box acts as a hardware encryption device with the encryption key stored on the RFID device rather than inside one's brains. The kit attaches to a SATA hard drive and connects to your computer via a spare USB 2.0 port. The device is unlocked by a keychain RFID transmitter that stores the drive's key. When the transmitter is activated next to the box the onboard encryption is enabled or disabled.

This feature is extremely tricky, as a locked drive connected to a new computer will always appear as if it has just left the factory assembly line. It appears empty and ready to be formatted for the first use. This means that the thief or an unauthorized person will not be able to access any of the data stored on the computer.

Data encryption is done in the disk's hardware and firmware, so there is no need for additional drives or cryptography software. This allows the users to enjoy its features, no matter whether they are running Mac, Windows or Linux operating systems. The enclosure is a standard, 2.5-inch unit, which enhances its portability, so the RFID function will be extremely useful if the disk gets lost or misplaced/stolen. I however wonder what happens if you lose both the disk and your keys with the RFID keychain attached.