Macworld

editBOX EB8MS review

High performance storage that's about space and time

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- **Manufacturer:** ProAVIO
- **Pros:** Screamingly fast – up to 650MBps
- **Cons:** Not portable
- **Price:** £1,116.31 (2TB), £1,457.86 (4TB)
- **Star rating:** ★★★★★ Macworld Editors' Choice

Sometimes it's not so much a matter of storage space, as how quickly you can fill the space with data. This is particularly the case with video editing. You still need lots of space but more importantly you need to be able to get the video on and off the drive at high speed.

The answer is the editBOX EB8MS, a mini-tower RAID enclosure with eight SAS/SATA hot-swappable drive bays which accommodates storage capacities of 2TB to 8TB. The 'MS' stands for Mini-SAS (Mini Serial Attached SCSI or SFF8088), which is faster than eSATA.

You'll need a RAID controller card in order to connect the EB8MS to your Mac. Since ProAVIO and Highpoint develop products in partnership we teamed up our test model with the 3522 Highpoint RocketRAID Controller Card (£520). In our tests the ProAVIO Editbox 8MS reached speeds in excess of 650Mbps in RAID 5. This is over nine times faster than the Mac's internal disks can manage.

The combination also supports RAID 6 dual-parity configuration as well as RAID 0,1,10, 5, and 50.

Just in case you thought all SATA controllers are the same, in our tests the ProAVIO/Highpoint combination whipped the other drives we looked at to a virtual standstill in comparison, beating the next best drive by a factor of six in RAID 5 configuration. In fact, the ProAVIO running in RAID 0 mode was still three times as fast as the next fastest RAID 5 drive.

A cheaper, controller-card option is the Highpoint RocketRAID 2522 (£385). We didn't try this out but we're told it's a high-end, 8-lane RAID Controller that offers speeds of up to 690Mbps(Read) and 576Mbps(Write) in RAID 5 Configuration, (with support for RAID levels 0,1,10, 50). Unlike the 3522, the 2522 supports Port-Multiplied eSATA on its mini-SAS ports, so it can be used with any eSATA-based RAID and a number of drives.

If you're out on location, you probably want to use your MacBook Pro. Be aware that there isn't a suitable controller for the MacBook Pro, but it will still run off the Express Port with any suitable PCI Express Controller and provide decent speeds.

Macworld Buying Advice

It's worth noting that adding extra internal disks into a Mac Pro might provide the storage required for video editing the largest projects, but even with a Mac Pro RAID Card it still wouldn't be possible to get speeds close to half the speed of the Editbox 8MS. By the time you'd bought four 1TB Internal Drives (£270) and a Mac Pro RAID Card (£510) you'd have spent £1,500 on something that isn't half as fast as the ProAVIO. Get the ProAVIO if you need the best performance available, and can afford it.