

Hey Mac Guy: I am getting further into home recording and am looking at upgrading RAM as well as an external drive to store files. We have a refurbished dual 1.25GHz Power Mac G4. According to our profile, Slot 1 currently has a 512MB DDR SDRAM PC2600U-25330 in it. The other 3 slots are empty. Right now, I am running Garage Band, but I'll be moving to Logic before too long, and I want to make sure I have plenty of power and speed to run music/recording applications without skipping a beat.

So, is getting another memory board as easy as buying it and slipping it into one of these slots, and if so, how much RAM should I get? Can you recommend a good external drive?



THE MAC GUY

— Logic Dictates

Hey Logic: Upgrading RAM in the Power Mac G4 is very easy. This machine has a door on the side that exposes the interior so you have easy access to the RAM slots. That system can hold up to 2 GB of RAM, and 512MB DIMMs will run you between \$20 and \$40 each depending on your vendor.

Upgrading your Mac's RAM is almost always a good idea; and for the kind of applications you describe, I would go for the full 2 GB, you will not regret it. Adding the RAM modules is indeed very straightforward, but you should take a few simple precautions.

The RAM modules only go in one way; it will be obvious from the slots on the connector end of the DIMM. Do not force the modules if they don't go in easily.

Make sure you are grounded, static electricity is your enemy in this endeavor. Work in a room without carpet and either use a grounding strap attached to your wrist or leave the computer plugged in but turned off and touch the power supply's metal casing inside the Mac to discharge any static you may have. Then unplug the computer.

Handle the DIMMs from the

edges only, don't touch the connectors. Push the DIMMs straight down into the slot with even pressure on the top.

You can view a PDF instruction guide that Apple put together about this process with your specific Mac (www.info.apple.com/usen/cip/pdf/g4mdd/g4mdd-mem-inbox.pdf). Apple has other instruction downloads for the Power Mac G4 in the Support section of their site (docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=26259).

An external drive is definitely a great investment. Since this Mac only has the original USB 1.1 ports, they will not be fast enough to support an external drive for the kind of work you are describing. Some of these Power Macs came with FireWire 800, but most only had FireWire 400. It is very common to find some quality external drives that support USB 2.0, FireWire 400, FireWire 800 and even the newer eSATA standard. Look for a drive that supports at least FireWire 400, but I would recommend one of the tri- or quad-interface drives for forward compatibility. LaCie (www.lacie.com), Western Digital (www.westerndigital.com) or Other World Computing (www.macsales.com) are all great vendors of quality drives that would suit your needs.

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