USB Flash Drives

USB Flash Drives are the latest innovation in removable storage devices for computers. These small portable devices are about the size of a stick of gum and are easier and faster to use than a CD-RW or a floppy drive and they are much more reliable than a floppy diskette. They are extremely useful for transferring files between computers (home and work) and can be used to store and install AristoCAT software downloads (especially those downloads which won't fit on a floppy diskette). The drives come in varying sizes from 32 megabytes to more than 4 gigabytes. The larger the drive size, the more expensive. Stores such as OfficeMAX and Staples are offering the smaller drives (32Mb) for as little as $10. These drives work great with the AristoCAT File Management Program. What size drive should you get? If you are not using Avsync with the large sound files, then the smaller drives will work just fine. If you are transferring sound files from Avsync between computers, then get a Flash Drive with at least 1Gb of capacity.

Essentially Flash Drives act as removable drives for your computer and will show up as E, F or G drives under the "My Computer" icon of your computer. For computers with Windows Me, 2000 or XP there is no need for additional software to access a Flash Drive. You simply plug them into a free USB port on your computer and the operating system will automatically recognize the type of device and automatically install the software drivers. The first time you plug one of these Flash Drives into a computer, a small balloon window will appear announcing *'NEW HARDWARE FOUND'* and then the operating system will take a couple of minutes to install the software driver. When the process is finished you will be informed the drive is ready to use. After the first installation the computer will automatically recognize and access the device almost immediately each time you plug it into your computer. If you are using a Flash Drive on a Windows 98 computer you will need to visit the vendor's web site and download the appropriate software driver or some Flash Drives come with a CD or floppy diskette with Windows 98 drivers. Please read all installation instructions. Some manufacturers of Flash Drives refer to their software drivers for Windows 98SE, which is the Second Edition of Windows 98. We have used the SanDisk USB Flash Drive with the first edition of Windows 98 with no problems. Note that Windows 95 and Windows NT do not support USB devices, so if you have a computer with Windows 95 or NT, you will not be able to use the Flash Drive with that computer.

Once a Flash Drive is plugged into the computer you will be able to access the drive using the AristoCAT File Management program. This means you can now copy files from your reporter folder to the drive by selecting the appropriate drive assignment from the drop down menu (Diskette Drive) that appears to the right of the bottom window in File Management and the drive will be named '(Removable Disk)'.