



INTEL

SSD 730 Series 240GB

Sometimes, if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself. That old saw is certainly applicable in the case of Intel's latest flagship solid-state drives for consumers. Intel's SSD 730 series drives, available in 240GB or 480GB, are all Intel components, all the time. And the skull logo that graces the shell of these drives suggests that there's more to the SSD 730 series than Intel internals.

Formerly code-named "Jackson Ridge," the 240GB SSD 730 we installed in the PAXbox relies on a third-generation Intel storage controller to do its dirty work. The MLC NAND in this drive is manufactured on Intel's 20nm lithography. That skull logo, though? It says, "Let's live a little." Answering that call, Intel overclocked the controller to 600MHz, a 50% increase from the default 400MHz. The SSD's NAND is also overclocked, boosted from 83MHz to an even 100MHz. Think of it like Turbo Boost for an SSD, only these overclocks are permanently enabled no matter what kind of workload you give the drive.

This handiwork translates to some pretty impressive throughput. Intel rates the 240GB SSD 730 for sequential reads and writes of 550MBps and 270MBps, respectively. The drive eats up random I/O operations, too, with 4K random reads and writes topping out at 86,000IOPS and 56,000IOPS, respectively. It's equally quick regardless of whether the data you



send through its tubes is compressible or incompressible. Performance scales quite well in a striped RAID configuration, too, so adding another drive in a RAID 0 will yield substantial performance gains.

The SSD 730 series drives deliver power-user performance, but they're also tough enough for the data center. Exhibit A: You can subject the 240GB SSD 730 to a punishing 50GB of writes per day, and you'll still be covered under Intel's five-year warranty. Considering that kind of demanding workload is way more than most enthusiasts will do in a day, which

is another way of saying these SSDs are built to last.

Although Intel lists the 240GB SSD 730 at \$0.93/GB, we were able to find it from a number of online retailers for much less than that. Winning the PAXbox gets you this dynamite SSD for nothing, but getting 240GB cutting-edge Intel solid-state storage for less than \$160 is a heck of a deal, too. ■

SSD 730 240GB
\$224
Intel
www.intel.com

SPECS

Interface: 6Gbps SATA; Controller: Intel Third Generation; Maximum sequential read/write: 550MBps/270MBps; Random read: 86,000IOPS (8GB span); Random write: 56,000IOPS (8GB span); Form factor: 2.5-inch; Warranty: 5 years