



## Version 3.1 of Disk Labeler

Robert Neal, of Romeoville, Illinois, and the author of the original Disk Labeler program that appeared in last month's MICROpendium, writes to tell us of version 3.1. The code for this differs considerably from the version that we published, so we're including the entire listing here. Version 3.1 features are the ability to include the date that the label was printed, which is useful for determining the last time the label was updated. Also, the number of files on the disk is also printed. The user may also select which drive to catalog.

"I think you'll also find this version is much easier to modify in that all the printer codes are included as variables, therefore not requiring users to search through the code to find all the printer codes that need to be changed."

```

1 ! ***** !23
5
2 ! ** DISKLAHL V3.1 ** !03
0
3 ! ** by ROBERT NEAL ** !14
8
4 ! ** TI Users Group ** !13
5
5 ! ** of Will County ** !18
6
6 ! ** ** !07
5
7 ! ** THIS PROGRAM ** !05
9
8 ! ** IS FRKR ** !21
    
```

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This newsletter is brought to you through the efforts of the officers and members of the HOOSIER USERS GROUP. Every member is encouraged to submit articles.

If you have an article you would like to share with the other members mail it to:

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Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the HOOSIER USERS GROUP.

```

3
9 ! ***** !23
5
100 DIM FN$(127),SZ$(127),PT
$(127):193
110 TYPES(1)="D/F" :: TYPES(
2)="D/V" :: TYPES(3)="I/F" :
: TYPES(4)="I/V" :: TYPES(5)
="PRO" !186
120 PL$="##### ### ##
" !020
130 TL1$="Avail:#### Used:##
## ## Files #####
###" !254
140 TL2$="#####
###" !237
150 OPEN #1:"PIO" !253
160 LF$=CHR$(27)&CHR$(65)&CH
R$(6)!** SETS LINE FEED TO
6/72 INCH !227
170 CONDS=CHR$(15)!** PUTS
PRINTER INTO CONDENSED PRINT
--17 CHAR/INCH !053
180 SUBONS=CHR$(27)&CHR$(83)
&CHR$(1)!** TURNS SUBSCRIPT
MODE ON !162
190 SUBOFF$=CHR$(27)&CHR$(84
)!** TURNS SUBSCRIPT MODE O
FF !042
200 RESET$=CHR$(27)&CHR$(84)
!010
210 DISPLAY AT(2,1)ERASE ALL
:"
=====:" : " by
: Bob Neal": " Version
3.1" !023
220 IF DATE$>" " THEN 250 !1
27
230 DISPLAY AT(10,1):"ENTER
TODAYS DATE: /" :: DISPLAY
AT(11,20):"-- --" !195
240 ACCEPT AT(10,20)SIZE(2):
MO$ :: ACCEPT AT(10,23)SIZE(
2):YR$ :: DATE$=MO$&"/&YR$
!178
250 DISPLAY AT(15,1)BEEP:"Th
e Disk to be Labeled is in":
"Which Drive (1-5)? 0 to QUI
T" !114
260 CALL KEY(0,K,S):: IF S=0
OR K<48 OR K>53 THEN 260 EL
SE IF K=48 THEN PRINT #1:RES
ET$ :: CLOSE #1 :: STOP !080
280 K=K-48 :: DISPLAY AT(19,
3):"Reading from Drive #";K
    
```

```

!042
290 OPEN #2:"DGK"&STR$(K,
", INPUT ,RELATIVE,INTERNAL !
133
300 FOR X=1 TO CNT :: FN$(X)
,SZ$(X),PT$(X)=" " :: NEXT X
!185
310 CNT=0 !156
320 INPUT #2:A$,J,J,K !156
330 A$=RPT$(" ",10-LEN(A$))&
A$ !189
340 FOR X=1 TO 127 !178
350 INPUT #2:FN$(X),A,SZ,S !
032
360 IF LEN(FN$(X))=0 THEN 40
0 !014
370 SZ$(X)=STR$(SZ):: SZ$(X)
=RPT$(" ",3-LEN(SZ$(X)))&SZ$
(X)!236
380 A=ABS(A):: PT$(X)=TYPES(
A):: IF A=4 AND S=254 THEN P
T$(X)=TYPES(5)!089
390 NEXT X !238
400 CNT=X-1 :: CLOSE #2 !200
410 PRINT #1:SUBOFF$&CONDS&L
F$:: PRINT #1,USING TL1$:ST
R$(K),STR$(J-K),CNT,DAT$,CH
R$(14)&A$ !102
420 PRINT #1:SUBONS&RPT$("="
,58):: LC=2 !178
430 FOR X=1 TO CNT STEP 3 !2
24
440 IF LC>9 THEN 450 ELSE 47
0 !050
450 PRINT #1:"": "" !139
460 LC=2 :: PRINT #1:SUBOFF$
:: PRINT #1,USING TL2$:CHR$
(14)&A$ :: PRINT #1:SUBONS::
: PRINT #1:RPT$("=",58)!200
470 PRINT #1,USING PL$&PL$&P
L$:FN$(X),SZ$(X),PT$(X),FN$(
X+1),SZ$(X+1),PT$(X+1),FN$(
X+2),SZ$(X+2),PT$(X+2):: LC=L
C+1 !172
480 NEXT X !238
490 FOR X=1 TO 12-LC :: PRIN
T #1:"" :: NEXT X :: GOTO 21
0 !111
    
```

### Lister revisited

Ray Kazmer, of Sylmar, California, provides the following file-listing program. It is the third to be published by MICROpendium (one was published last month), but it is the easiest to use and the

(See Page 3)



## DISK CONTROLLERS - from TI to NYARC

by Jerry Coffey, January 1987

The views expressed in this article reflect the author's personal experience with TI, Corcomp, and Nyarc disk controllers. Technical data has been verified wherever possible, but is not publicly documented in some instances. Please bring any errors to the attention of the author.

The disk capacity of the TI99 has increased in just a few years from less than 80K (a single one-sided 35 track drive) to almost 2.9 megabytes (four double-sided, double-density, 80 track drives). The early standalone was replaced by the PEBox system which would support three double-sided 40 track drives (540K). Corcomp introduced their four drive double-density system (1440K), followed by Nyarc's similar system with two double-density formats (2560K and 1440K). Then in 1986, Nyarc offered its 80 track upgrade which doubled capacity again. Even as capacity was increasing rapidly, the TI and Corcomp controllers differed only modestly in I/O speed. When NYARC introduced its fast DSDD controller, few reviewers did justice to its speed advantage. Early comparisons were done at the standard TI or Corcomp interface, but the big speed gains required taking advantage of the much tighter sector interface possible with the high-speed NYARC card. To understand how this works we need to take a look at the way a disk drive performs.

## Disk Drive Fundamentals

A floppy disk drive writes information in concentric rings called "tracks" on a thin plastic disk coated with a film of magnetic particles. Each track in turn is divided into blocks of information

called sectors. A blank disk has one (or more) index holes used to synchronize the process of writing to and reading from the disk. The type with many holes are called "hard sectored" since each sector has its position fixed by an index hole. The type of disks used by most computers have only one hole and are called "soft sectored". In this system the computer must write magnetic signposts on the disk to mark out each sector in a process called "formatting" or "initializing" a disk. These signposts take up a substantial fraction of the space on a track since they include not only sector numbers but buffers (filler bytes) that allow the computer to get into synchronization to read or write sectors of data and to prevent the sector identifier from being overwritten by a drive operating at a slightly different speed from the drive that formatted the disk.

The typical 5.25 inch disk drive has a "stepper motor" capable of moving the drive's read/write head(s) in or out along a radius of the disk in steps of 1/48 of an inch (thus the terminology "48 tpi" = 48 tracks per inch). Since the inner tracks have a smaller circumference, they crowd the bits of information together. Magnetic coatings on a floppy disk are rated by their capacity in bits per inch at standard magnetic flux for the write head. This figure is usually over 5000 bpi for modern floppies, but was somewhat lower a few years ago. The circumference of the inner track of a 40 or 80 track disk is about 10 inches -- which allows about 6250 bytes to be written on the track without exceeding 5000 bpi. For comparison, the Corcomp double density format requires over 6400 bytes per track. Media limitations were the reason that some early 5.25 disk drives only used the outer 35 tracks. The 16 sector (by 256 bytes/sector) format recommended by most drive makers requires only 6250 bytes per track and includes several hundred additional "buffer" bytes to compensate for differences in drive timing.

## Timing is EVERYTHING

With soft-sectored disks, the integrity of the read/write processes require critical timing. The disk rotates 300 rpm within a small margin. This means there are about 250 thousand magnetic pulses (bits) passing beneath the head each second. In single density format, the majority of these pulses are timing or filler bits -- in double density, many of the timing bits are suppressed in order to double the rate of data bits. In a typical sector read the drive must bring the disk up to speed, recognize the index hole, step out to track zero (to get its bearings) determine single or double density verify its position, step in to the target track, verify the track number (written in the format operation) detect the sector identifier as it flies past, then immediately read the 256 data bytes into memory. Five of these operations require accurate reading of the magnetic pulses whizzing by at over 230K bits per second.

If you do some quick arithmetic (256 bytes/sector = 2048 bits/sector into 250k bits/second)... haaa... Why can't the drive read a 125 sector file in one second? Well first many of those bits are not data bits, they are overhead to keep things synchronized and allow for timing variation between drives. Second, some time is used moving the head from one track to the next when more than one track must be read. Third, 250K is the instantaneous read rate and the computer must take time to do other things like save the last sector out of its buffer to make room for the next one. In the standard TI protocol for reading a disk, the data is moved into VDP ram (so the drive could be used without the memory expansion) before it goes to the expansion memory. All this thrashing eats great chunks of the time available for reading data. By the time one sector is safely tucked away in the 32K card, several sectors have already passed by the drive's read head. If the sectors were written

consecutively on the disk, we would have to wait a full revolution (0.2 seconds) before the next sector would pass under the head. To avoid this inefficiency, the consecutively numbered sectors are spaced out around the disk so that they are separated by just enough time to take care of other business. The actual pattern in which the sectors are scattered is called the "interlace". The idea of the interlace is to spread the sectors out to match the timing needs of the hardware — both the time needed to stash each sector and the time needed to step from one track to the next and get the the head settled down for some serious (250K bps) reading.

Interlace and Head Step Times

Life was simple with the TI disk controller. Both the interlace and the head step time were locked into the controller's PROM (that's the programmable chip that contains the control programs for the card). The head step time is the built-in delay between step signals to allow the stepper motor to move the head one "click" in or out. The TI settings are very conservative (read "slow") to allow for slow drives. The step time is 20ms — if you step from track zero to track 39, it takes 20x39=780ms, almost four revolutions of the drive. The TI interlace lays the sectors down on a track in the order 075318642. This allows all sectors to be read in four revolutions of the disk though the slow head step lets another revolution go by between tracks. Thus the maximum read rate is about 9 sectors per five revolutions (= one second) or 2304 bytes per second.

When Corcomp designed its double density disk controller, allowances were made for the increased speed of later drives by permitting the step rate to be set with DIP switches for each drive. The step rates available are 30, 20, 12, and 8 (the faster values quoted in the CC manual are referenced to the wrong clock

speed). They also provided a choice of interlace options, though only a couple of them are practical. The default interlaces are labeled "7" for single density and "10" for double density. The single density interlace is the same as TI's, but with a faster step setting the head can be moved without losing a revolution and thus reads 20% faster than the TI controller. The double density interlace allows 18 sectors to be read in five revolutions, but it doesn't leave enough margin to stomp the last sector and stop the head in time to catch the zero sector of the next track (that's why the sector number "hangs" for 0.2 seconds each 18 sectors while verifying a formatted disk — you are seeing the extra revolution needed to acquire the first sector of the next track). Thus the maximum read rate is 18/1.2 or 15 sectors per second, about 67% faster than the TI controller. Users of the CC controller have probably noticed that it loads its own MANAGER program faster than this. In this case a special loader bypasses VDP and loads directly to CPU RAM — this faster handling of the data allows the stepper motor to be activated sooner and saves one revolution per track (so the 98 sector file can be read in about 5.5 seconds). This provided a foretaste of the speed that NYARC would achieve with its double density controller.

The NYARC controller bypasses VDP RAM to load directly to CPU RAM. This technique coupled with a buffer RAM chip on the controller card provided a quantum jump in disk I/O speed. The NYARC card reads the TI single density interlace at 11.25 sectors/second (the same as Corcomp) and reads the CC 18 sector/track interlace at 18 sectors/second (the same speed Corcomp reads its MANAGER program), but this is only the beginning. Since the hardware empties its sector buffer faster, consecutive sectors can be placed closer together allowing a track to be read in fewer revolutions, i.e., it supports a faster interlace. With fast drives, the 9 sector/track single density format can be read at interlace "2". (NOTE: In the NYARC terminology, the interlace number represents the number of disk

revolutions required to read a track. This works out to 22.5 sectors/second compared to 9 for the TI and 11.25 for the CC controller. The NYARC 18 sector format can be read at interlace "3" 26.67 sectors/second — 3 times as fast as the TI controller and almost twice as fast as Corcomp double density. The Corcomp 18 sector format can be read at interlace "3" or "4", but the data rate is the same in either case, 22.5 sectors/second. Interlace "4" is exact but requires a very quick head step. Interlace "3" reads the track in 3 revolutions but forces an extra revolution for the step from track to track because sectors 17 and 0 are adjacent on the disk. Though both interlaces have the same data rate, interlace "3" is safer if you are uncertain about the speed of your stepper motor.

In order to read and write both double density formats, the NYARC system must insert an additional step in some I/O operations — sector zero must be read to determine whether a double density disk has 16 or 18 sectors per track. This data is needed to convert the the logical sector numbers used by the TI operating system into track and sector-within-track addresses for the floppy disk controller chip. The TI and Corcomp controllers do not need this step because they do not use the full potential of the TI disk I/O protocol. Once this step, accessing sector zero, is added to the various disk operations, it opens the system up for using more than two formats — including 80 track formats.



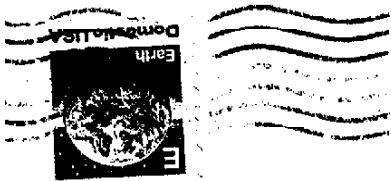
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