

PRELIMINARY OPERATION MANUAL - QL DISK

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

QL DISK provides a number of advantages over the QL's native microdrive system. Perhaps the most important of these is the greatly reduced tendency to media corruption.

Tape media of any kind is prone to stretch-distortion. Microdrive cartridges are, like any mechanical device, also susceptible to wear. When this occurs, the message "CHANGED OR BAD MEDIUM" announces the probable destruction of valuable data. While this can also occur with a disk-based system, it is a relatively rare occurrence, the source of which can usually be found in a source other than the media itself.

Another advantage of the QL DISK system is that loading and search times are usually greatly reduced.

When the microdrive system is accessed, finding the required file, if it occurs immediately after the sector currently at the head position, can take up to 15 seconds for the system to point to the beginning of a file.

Further, if the file does not occur sequentially (from the system's point of view), it will continue running until file loading is completed. This can require several minutes of running time, while the tape passes the head several times looking for successive sector numbers.

In this sense, microdrives are single dimensional serial devices. An improvement in loading time can be made if, when you are satisfied with the content of a cartridge, you then copy the entire cartridge to another. This will place the copied files in an order more consistent with loading requirements.

QL DISK, however, being a two-dimensional device, allows a search to be made, according to sector header information, both in terms of sector and track location. Loading time improvements of better than 600% are not uncommon.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

In order to obtain the maximum benefit of your QL DISK system, a few very important points should be observed. QL DISK is a precision piece of equipment and certain precautions should be observed in using it:

- * Because QL Disk is precision engineered electro-mechanical device, under no circumstances should the unit be subjected to shock or vibration.
- * When moving the QL and QL Disk, the drive unit should be disconnected from the interface. Failing to do this may damage the unit's connector or distort the alignment of the drive with the interface.
- * Do not leave a disk in the drive when the power is switched off. Besides the distinct possibility of corrupting you disk, it is also possible that the head transport mechanism could be damaged.
- * Both the disk drive and recorded media are very sensitive to outside magnetic fields. As a security precaution, we strongly recommend that both QL Disk as well as any media susceptible to corruption (disks or microdrive cartridges) are kept no closer than 30cm from your television or monitor.

Figure 1 - Assembly illustration
