



Small Is Beautiful

Sinclair's Microdrive is just one answer to the cost and size problems associated with mass storage. It uses a narrow loop of magnetic tape instead of a floppy disk

For the home computer user the conventional cassette offers a cheap and generally reliable method of storing programs or loading commercial software. However, the cassette system does have several drawbacks. The main problem is that of speed; even a fast cassette system that operates at 1,200 bits per second can take several minutes to load a large program or search for a particular piece of data. The second major problem is that the tape moves only one way — the computer cannot usually operate the fast forward and rewind controls. If the program is at the end of a tape then the entire tape must be wound through the recorder before loading can begin.

A disk system solves all these problems, but at a price. What many home computer users really need is something that is many times faster than a

Tape Drive Roller

The tape is pulled through the wafer by this rotating roller, which acts like the drive roller on a cassette recorder

Tape Head

A miniaturised record and replay head, similar to those found in conventional cassette recorders

Interface 1

As well as providing the necessary connections for the Microdrives, this unit provides a serial port for connecting printers and a network interface allowing up to 64 ZX Spectrums to be connected together

Tape Protection Microswitch

When the wafer has been protected by removing the data protection tab, this microswitch is activated, preventing the Microdrive from recording onto the wafer

Expansion Connector

Up to eight Microdrives can be plugged together through this connector

MICRODRIVE COURTESY OF SINCLAIR RESEARCH

Indicator LED

Indicates that the Microdrive is in use

Wafer Slot

The Microdrive wafer plugs in here