Altair Floppy Drive Release History

(Based on articles and price lists in "Computer Notes," the Altair newsletter)

April 1975, Disk drive appears in the Altair equipment price list along with "DOS" and "BASIC III" for disk. Lead time 60 days.

July 1975, Article, "Altair Floppy Disk" states disk BASIC and Altair DOS will be available "late July."

October 1975, Article/price list offers Altair DOS and the Altair floppy drive. No lead time specified.

November 1975, Article, "Notes about Disk BASIC"

February 1976, Announcement, "Disk BASIC Running"

March 1976, Announcement, "Disk BASIC ready to ship on March 29, 1976"

May 1976, Article, "Disk Precautions" makes it clear that disk drives and BASIC have been shipping. Announcement that "Altair DOS is near."

July 1976, Article, "Disk Hardware Notes" makes it clear that disk drive and BASIC have been shipping. Disk BASIC update from v3.3 to v3.4 announced.

August 1976, Article, "Disk Hardware Notes" makes it clear that disk drive and BASIC have been shipping.

August 1977, Article, "Altair DOS Now Available"

Summary:

MITS offered a disk drive along with disk BASIC and a DOS on their pricelist in April 1975. However, the first drives with software (disk BASIC only at this point) did not begin shipping until about a year later starting in April 1976. It does not appear MITS shipped hardware only (i.e., drive without BASIC) prior to this date.

Altair DOS, a platform for development of assembly language programs, did not begin shipping until August 1977, over two years after first announced.