Altair T.M. Minidisk System (88-MDS, 680b-MDS)

The Altair Minidisk System, used for mass storage of data with Altair microcomputers, provides 71,680 formatted bytes of storage capacity per minidiskette. The Minidisk System has a data transfer rate of 125,000 bits per second with an access time of less than three seconds. Included in the Minidisk System are two controller boards for the 88-MDS (one for the 680b-MDS), an Interconnect Cable, one Minidisk Drive and Altair Minidisk Basic software. Additional Minidisk Drives may be purchased separately.

System Design

The Minidisk System's Disk Drive consists of the Drive itself, Interconnect cable and one blank minidiskette. Inside the Minidisk Drive cabinet are the Disk Drive, power supply, line buffers and addressing circuitry. The Drive Address is switch selectable and the selected address is displayed on the front panel for easy identification. The Disk Drive also offers WRITE PROTECT as a standard feature.

The Minidisk Controller, consisting of an Interconnect Cable and two Controller Boards that plug into the Altair computer bus, provides interaction between the computer and the Minidisk Drive. All control, status and data input/output for the Minidisk System are handled through three I/O ports dedicated to the Minidisk Controller. To insure maximum life of the Drive motor, a timer in the Controller turns the system off if the Minidisk remains unaccessed for five seconds.

Minidisk BASIC

The software most commonly used with the Minidisk System is Altair Minidisk BASIC, which resides in the lower 20K of memory and provides the disk utilization routines. Altair Minidisk BASIC includes the standard features of BASIC, plus many extra functions that significantly increase programming power. The Software Driver for the Minidisk READ/WRITE function simplifies Controller design by implementing the hard-sectoring technique.

Options and Accessories

1. Software— Altair Minidisk BASIC, available on a WRITE Protected Minidiskette, is virtually identical in operation and features to Altair Disk BASIC. The documentation includes Bootstrap Listings and READ/WRITE Driver Codes. Specify cassette tape or paper tape for the Bootstrap Loader, if required.

2. MDBL PROM— Minidisk Bootstrap Loader on a Programmable Read Only Memory IC is designed for use with the 88-PMC PROM Memory Card or 680b PROM socket at the highest 256 byte block address.

3. DRWT PROM— Designed for use with the 88-PMC at the third highest 256 byte block address, the Minidisk READ/WRITE Test PROM contains fundamental diagnostic tests for checking hardware operation.