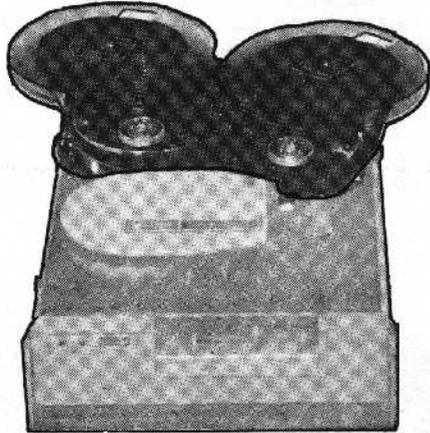


A RADICAL SOFTWARE STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT

FILM CHAIN ADAPTER

A lot of good information lives on 8mm and 16mm film, but very few people have gotten into transferring it to videotape. Sony makes an attachment which takes an image out of a movie projector and prisms it into a C-Mount video camera (e.g. a Porta-Pak camera). But they manufacture it for their European catalog.

However, Harvey Radio in New York City (444 Madison Avenue) stocks some of Sony's European line, the film chain adapter included. It's a good thing to have if you want to multiply access to your films. PRICE: \$125.00.



PORTA-PAK HOUR REEL CONVERTER

In a stationary situation the Porta-Pak deck can be a hassle because the longest tape it uses is 30 minutes. If you are taping with just one deck, the activity either has to stop while you change reels or the activity goes on and you're unable to tape it. Not a major problem but for people with just a Porta-Pak deck an hour adapter might be useful.

You can buy a clip-on module to use hour reels on a portable deck from Scan Rate Inc., 27 Palm Court, Paramus, New Jersey 07652. PRICE: \$189.95.

TIME-LAPSE VIDEO

A company called Odetics in California modifies Shibaden and Sony decks (the Porta-Pak included) to do variable speed time-lapse recording. Write Odetics for prices at: 1845 South Manchester Avenue, Anaheim, California 92802.

VIDEOCASSETTES: Sony, Panasonic, Cartrivision, and the death of EVR

They're here. Almost. Sony is selling their playback only machine (color, stereo sound) for \$800, and a record/playback deck for \$1,295. Our Sony dealers in New York have already placed orders and Sony itself says they are selling them. Moreover, one commercial tape house in Manhattan has tooled up to do mass dubbing (Teletronics) so Sony seems serious about it. We transferred one of our half-inch tapes at Teletronics and the copy was excellent. Very encouraging given the potential of cassettes for distribution. More important, the Sony cassette recorder can be used for dubbing as you would with an ordinary half-inch deck. Thus, no middle man. The Sony

machines are, of course, three-quarter inch tape and some rumors have it that Sony is abandoning their half-inch line for the newer standard. While it is true that they discontinued all half-inch color recorders (i.e. the AV5000a), our correspondent visited the Sony factory in Tokyo last summer and was assured that production is expanding. Moreover, Sony is now selling 1,000 Porta-Paks alone in the United States each month.

Panasonic has also announced a three-quarter inch machine which will be compatible with the Sony. (Just to play it safe they're also going to market a half-inch, type-one standard, cassette player. So who knows). All we know is that Sony is serious, has a proven record of consumer selling and servicing; and their machine is beyond the prototype stage and operates very well. Moreover, you can use it with any TV set (the off-air record model has a built-in broadcast tuner).

On the other hand, Cartrivision has taken big newspaper ads announcing that Sears is selling their unit (delivers in June) for \$1,600. But that includes a built-in TV set as rumor has it that the Cartrivision cassette deck isn't stable enough to feed any TV.

Cartrivision is using a software first approach and thus is concentrating on consumer sales whereas Sony seemingly has no notions of programming and is aiming for the institutional market. The Cartrivision catalog of tapes includes every old movie and educational film imaginable, and not one thing produced especially for the medium. But they are moving quickly into the consumer area (Time Inc. will also be marketing their material through Cartrivision). Meanwhile, their stock, which was issued at \$20 a share, has doubled in price.

Finally, prices for pre-recorded cassettes will range from \$5 to \$30 and feature-length films will be rented for \$6. (Sony 60 minute cassettes: \$35 blank). The \$1,600 price also includes a black-and-white camera to plug into the console recorder. They are obviously serious, especially since Sears is making its service network part of the deal. The system is not compatible with any other and Cartrivision is saying that "Survival of the Fittest" will prevail. Honest. That's from their advertising copy.

Given the imbecilic quality of their catalog ("How to Stop Smoking," "Nepal: People of the Mountains," "Reducing Executive Tension") and the fact that the hardware itself is a conspicuous consumption item (at a time when the national economy is still sluggish), Cartrivision will be a test of whether the mentality of broadcast television can prevail in videocassettes.

Already, of course, there has been a massive failure because of lack of insight into videocassettes as a new medium. That is (or was) the CBS EVR system which they have discontinued at a \$10 million loss. Everyone but CBS knew that a video playback system based on film technology was not going to make it, but they pushed on anyway, trying to substitute public relations for good design, and marketing surveys for common sense.

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