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Subject: Magnetic Tape

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 02:38:50 GMT

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I wonder if this place should have a magnetic tape forum? I'm not sure how active it would be, particularly at first. But I have both reel-to-reel and cassette tape drives, and I realized there wasn't antplace I knew of that talked about them. One drive I have is the Pioneer RT-909. It's a good, general purpose reel-to-reel and it has remained very popular. It isn't sold new anymore, but they go like hotcakes on eBay. They sold new for about a grand, and they've really held their value. A used one that is well-maintained is worth as much as it sold for new; Broken ones still sell for \$300 and \$400 on eBay. They are easy to maintain and Pioneer still has many parts in inventory, but some parts are out of stock and aren't produced anymore. Still, it is a good and popular reel-to-reel and it sounds very good. Cassette has always been important to me too. In the 70's and 80's, cassette was the popular media for portable and car sound. If you wanted hi-fi in the car, you had to own very good quality cassette decks. Not only did your car deck need to be good, but you had to have a good recorder at home, because most store-bought tapes weren't very good. Treble response was usually terrible, and the general quality of the recording was poor. What I found was that the best cassette recorders had a record bias adjustment, and this is still true today. The tape head must be aligned and clean, and obviously the deck must be of good quality. But even if all these things were fine, the absense of a bias adjustment limited your ability to make quality recordings on various tapes. A modern cassette tape deck I've found that has this feature is the Sony KA1 (TA-KA1 ESA). If you have need for recording high quality cassettes, I recommend this deck. It only costs a few hundred dollars, and makes high-quality recordings on all types of tapes.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape

Posted by [AI](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 03:19:47 GMT

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I have well over 1000 cassettes and still bring them out to archive/back-up. Many of these are live performaces and I used TDK SA and TDK SAX in the 70's and shifted to TDK MAR with the cast aluminum shell. I probably have 300 MAR tapes. I also used Maxell UDXLII when the TDK was out of stock. For many of the tapes, I archive to VHS HI FI. These days is it more economical to transfer them to CD. The VHS HI FI does a great job and is very reliable. In 1984, I purchased a Mitsubishi VHS HI FI and I have 20 year old tapes that still work fine. I got away from the reel to reel 1/4" machines though.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 03:56:47 GMT

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Sounds like you've gone in an excellent, high-quality direction. How popular do you think magnetic tape is today? Do you think there are still lots of people that use some form of audio tape for hi-fi?

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [lon](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 09:30:11 GMT  
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The magnetic tape could possibly relate to the request I made to put up a digital editing discussion for a product like Goldwave. GW also has no home for discussion. I started with digital editing and archiving from old 'airchecks' on audiotape.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 09:48:11 GMT  
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Hi Lon! You might be right - That might be another good discussion group. Does it not fit into the Digital Editor or Pro Audio Processor category though? If so, there already are discussion forums here at the Digital Audio and Pro Audio forums. One thing I've found about discussion boards like this is that once you've posted something, internet search engines pick it up and within a couple of months, people with interest can find it and join in the discussion. This is particularly true if the subject of interest is contained in the subject title of your post. As an example, I noticed the Vintage Radio forum wasn't listed in search engine results for "tube radio forum." So by making a post with that in its subject title, search engines will pick it up and help tube radio enthusiasts find the forum. The subject name is the next most important thing to the forum name in search engine results.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [Mike.e](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 13:35:13 GMT  
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hi wayne personally i think theres lots of forums already. could this cassette tape, fit into any existing categories? -vintage? or what about 'turntables vinyl and cassette' or just rename it 'analog replay' or something similar.. so that the analog devices are in their own and the digital audio are in their own category already....-) If u cut the pie into many slices for many... there is only a tiny bit

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Subject: Gold wave is an ok editor.  
Posted by [Al](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 15:28:06 GMT  
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Personally, Soundforge 6.0 or 7.0 is the cleanest one I use. Perhaps this can be put in pro sound.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [Al](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 15:30:33 GMT  
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Those who are serious professions "resort " to it. The digital realm holds excitement and promise as the best way to go. With 32 bit "bit depth" and 384K sampling FQ, there is no distinction from the original that is audible or measureable. The editing power is immense and the non-phase shift equilization unmatched.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [hurdy\\_gurdyman](#) on Wed, 28 Jan 2004 14:00:46 GMT  
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I second the idea of having vinyl and tape together. I suspect there won't be a lot of activity for just tape. I still use cassette to record my band rehearsals on my Tascam 133 with good results, but don't know anyone else who still use tape. Dave

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2004 02:17:41 GMT  
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I had a Denon 3head cassett with a time remaining feature that was very accurate. I could add the song times and calculate exact 45 minute sets. Sometimes the song would end right within 5 seconds left on the tape. When it died I tried every Denon site including the East Coast sales dept. but for some reason no one could repair that particular function; boy do I miss that! Wayne I think there is pent up demand for R to R info. I still use my Akai to make party tapes off the Turntable but I sure would like to expand the Tape knowledge. Even considering a good ten inch, maybe Teac before they get too popular and run up the price. I hate ebay.

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Subject: Re: Gold wave is an ok editor.  
Posted by [lon](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2004 05:15:45 GMT  
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I am most familiar with Goldwave and the new version has solved some of the user interface problems.

Digital editing or pro audio was a connection I didn't make straight off. Wayne is likely right about the 'curve time' and keyword usage to establish a thread within one of the current forums.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2004 07:56:41 GMT  
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I think we're having a pretty good discussion about tape here too. Maybe it could just be one of those subjects for general? Then again, maybe you're right, that the vinyl forum could be changed to cover the broader topic of analog media, tape and vinyl disk. This is sort of like having mpeg players in the same digital audio category as CD's and DVD's.

On another topic, how many of those "mydoom" virus E-Mails are you getting each day? Did you see the free McAfee scanner in the tower forum?

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Subject: Pioneer RT-909 Reel-to-Reel  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2004 08:13:30 GMT  
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There are others, but the Pioneer RT-909 is one reel-to-reel tape deck that I know is particularly popular.

On the subject of repairs, that's one thing that makes pro units so attractive. They are more likely to be serviceable for a long time, with parts available from the manufacturer. There are some commercial units that have a long support period, but I think the majority of them are forgotten in an incredibly short time. That's one thing I hate - If you can't get parts for some this stuff, it's rendered unserviceable. You can usually second-source electronics components, but little plastic parts of mechanical assemblies aren't so easy.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2004 12:42:56 GMT

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yes very familiar with that unit, the rather slimline type, excellent sound! What is the basic difference in the commercial verse home units? Better transports? How do you adress tape decay over time and the loss of high freq. each time the tape is played? I have found the sound to be indistinguishable from the record except for slight tape hiss, much better than CD. Does the 909 carry 10 " reels?

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2004 15:02:58 GMT

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RT-909's will handle the large reels, yes. But I wouldn't call 'em slim by any means. They are built to mount in 19" EIA racks, and are about a foot deep.

Pioneer RT-909 Reel-to-Reel Tape Deck

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#### File Attachments

1) [Pioneer\\_RT-909.jpg](#), downloaded 119 times

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Subject: Re: Pioneer RT-909 Reel-to-Reel

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 30 Jan 2004 00:43:56 GMT

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That is a beauty? What about maintainence, alignment, capstan wear other adjustments do you do your own work? I dream of using my Akai or upgrading; like that scene in Pulp Fiction where Vincent enters Marcellus's house and there sits this huge Teac in the living room and it clicks on as he enters, playing Dusty Springfield singing Son of a Preacher Man.

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Subject: Re: Pioneer RT-909 Reel-to-Reel

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 30 Jan 2004 00:46:23 GMT

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The question mark after the first sentence is supposed to be an exclamation point!

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape

Posted by [Mike.e](#) on Fri, 30 Jan 2004 01:52:33 GMT

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Personally i use Cassette tape sometimes for lofi recordings-as my stereo has no outs! and it has no inputs either,so i cant go hifi > pc > hifi amps > hifi speakers.....i have recorded radio>cassette tape > pc \*mp3\*just think of the distortion artifacts :-Sand im talking a 5\$ cassette tape player on my plastic sanyo system :-Punfortunately my pc mucked(my new one) and i cudnt save the mp3s ,those were my fav-whats worse is i hardly know the artist either-those songs just had something in them to cause extreme happyness!

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Subject: Re: Pioneer RT-909 Reel-to-Reel

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 30 Jan 2004 12:05:07 GMT

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I always thought the RT-909 was an attractive deck too. I maintain my deck, and have owned it for about 25 years. Service and owners manuals for this deck can be purchased from [www.StereoManuals.com](http://www.StereoManuals.com).

So far, all I've had to do was replace the pinch rollers, but it's time for a tension adjustment. When motor torque gets off, the tape speed slows and it acts like a mechanical drag. But adjust the driver circuits and you're back in business. It is a rare occurrence, but these things have been on the road long enough that it is a known failure mode, and I'd consider it to be a common symptom. I've never had to do this tension adjustment on this deck and it's had heavy use, so "common symptom" shouldn't be taken to mean that it necessarily happens frequently. But I've seen it on other RT-909 decks and performed the alignment for people, and it is probably one of the more common trouble symptoms described of them.

Here's a fun little story. I bought this tape deck new in the late seventies, and back then, I had a little computer based on a 6502 microprocessor, 4Kb RAM and 8Kb BASIC on ROM. It was a Synertek Systems Sym-1, also called a Vim-1. Lots of digital I/O - Great for building robots and controlling stuff in your room. So I connected a half dozen lines on this computer to the control buttons (play, fast-forward, etc.) and also monitored the index pulses. On the back of my RT-909 is a DB-25 connector to allow connection between the computer and the tape deck, and I used the tape deck both to store data and music.

I would put digital index files at the front of tapes that held a catalog of their contents, and you could select what music to play and it would automatically seek the songs in whatever order you wanted. So I had an early form of shuttle search and indexing. I also stored all my little programs; PiAlign and other programs were stored on one of my reel-to-reel tapes back then. Back in my college days, people would walk by my room and see the reel-to-reel "magically"

and I still have the tape deck and the computer to remember them by.

Seems like just yesterday to me, but also a long time ago, know what I mean?

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Subject: Re: Pioneer RT-909 Reel-to-Reel  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 30 Jan 2004 17:19:16 GMT  
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Absolutely, its these memories that provide the continuity and connection that make this a community. That is a great memory; ties in with college days and all those remembrances. Music shure sounded good back then. Let me share one more , Back in the day we spent every summer day at the beach. Approaching the beach from the walkway you climbed a set of stairs and at the top you overlooked the entire beach, somtimes full with upwards of 10-20 thousand people on a warm day. I remmember once cresting the dune and at the top hearing the cummulative sound from god knows how many AM transistor radios all playing the same song from the popular station WMCA, "Good Guys"; the song was Stevie Wonder "My Cherie' Amour" The sound filled the air like a wave, That remains one of the telling memories of summer. Love these stories.

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [hurdy\\_gurdyman](#) on Mon, 02 Feb 2004 15:48:58 GMT  
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Where's the tower forum? My minds not working good today.Dave

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Subject: Re: Magnetic Tape  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 02 Feb 2004 15:58:17 GMT  
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At the main page, there's a link over on the right side. The URL is [www.AudioRoundTable.com/Tower](http://www.AudioRoundTable.com/Tower).

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