Subject: Archaic Storage Media Sermon
Posted by Dean Kukral on Tue, 03 Feb 2004 15:30:44 GMT
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The old geezers on the group reminiscing about magnetic tape brings to mind the issue of preservation of music. I am still using thirty year old speakers and a twenty-five year old amplifier, but I have seen media come and go.Reel-to-reel tape suffers from bleed-through and should be rewound every now and then. Also, heat will degrade the data over time, so tapes need to be stored in a freezer. I don't know how serious these problems are, but when I worked at NCR, we stored our back-ups in salt mines far below ground. I wonder if there are still a bunch of (unplayable?) tapes down there? Wayne's point about pro equipment is well-taken, but still delays the inevitable.Vinyl is not final. It is a fluid. Every time a record is played the highs are worn off a bit. When it just sits, it flows, and the highs flow away. It's a joke what some people will pay for a turntable to play scratchy old vinyl on. (I gave my collection to the Goodwill. Can you believe that some people are willing to actually pay money for forty year old vinyl!!)So, copy your stuff to cassettes? I'm suprised you can still buy a cassette player! Can you get an 8-track? (Long ago I gave the neighborhood kid my cassettes and player.) Cassette tape suffers from the same problems stated above for reel-to-reel.Copy your stuff to Hi-Fi Beta. Or VHS. Several years ago I purchased an expensive S-VHS. Shortly after that I got a TIVO, and have not used the VHS since. What DVD has not done, TIVO has. VCR's are dead. Of course, they are magnetic tape, too.Got any software in 5" floppies? (Or 8" floppies??) Fat chance trying to find a player. Even if the s/w would run under your O.S. Who needs any floppy when you can use a gigabyte compactflash card to transfer data or a cd to distribute it? And, floppies are magnetic media, too, and suffer from heat.CD's, even DVD's won't be around much longer. Twenty years from now every piece of recorded music currently in existence from Marlena Dietrich to Britney Spears will be unplayable and lost, unless someone copies it time and time again to the latest medium. Oops, I misspoke myself. Some of Thomas Edison's stuff may still be playable. You know, those old cylinders. Because they do not require hi-tech to be played.

Subject: Re: Archaic Storage Media Sermon
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 03 Feb 2004 16:31:23 GMT
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Great post!You're right about the problems with vinyl and tape. Of course they're vulnerable. Of course vinyl wears and can skip pop and crack. Tape is sensitive to demagnetization, drop-outs, bleed-through and wear. But then again, the "sampling rate" of vinyl and tape is much higher than that of CD's, or even of SACD's or DVD's. And, yes, I still have some old 5" diskettes. Even have some 8" diskettes. Better still, I have the drives to run 'em on. Also have 9-track NRZI tapes and some 10Mb and 277Mb removable disk packs. One has 2 platters and the other has ten, both are a nice portable size of 15" and as thick and heavy as a bowling ball.Gotta love nostalgia, yeah!

Subject: Re: Archaic Storage Media Sermon
Posted by Dean Kukral on Tue, 03 Feb 2004 21:19:07 GMT
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WOW!You must go back to the days of the Heathkit or Altair, or whatever the thing was called. 8" floppies!! (What were you, in High School? Perhaps in college.) My first personal computer was an Apple II, somewhat later.And disk packs and drives? I'll bet you bought them from the surplus outlet where you once worked. "NRZI" was so long ago that I forget what it means. Something to do with whether it was random access or sequential, wasn't it? Wayne, you need to clean out your basement!! :)A few years ago my 5" drive broke and I had to get a used one to replace it. Now that I think of it, it might have come from my first "pc" built in the mid eighties. Time flies when you're getting old! :(Still, you had better copy all that reel-to-reel stuff to a DVD or one of these days it will be toast.

Subject: Re: Archaic Storage Media Sermon
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 04 Feb 2004 00:18:54 GMT
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I was an engineer for Data General in the early eighties. Most everything used for business and industry still had disk packs and 9 track tapes through the mid-eighties, gradually being replaced by Winchester disk drives and streaming tapes. But believe it or not, some places were still running systems with core memories and drum drives through the seventies, and even into the early nineties. Non-technical government stuff mostly.As for my audio reel-to-reel deck, I don't use it for archival storage. It is really mostly a novelty for me, and I keep recordings of albums on tape. If one were to start sounding like it's losing top end, I could re-record but truthfully, I get tired of it long before then and re-use the tape to record something else. Again, it's mostly for the sake of novelty. As for the cassette, I use it to record stuff for the car. I could install a CD unit for the car, but that would take modification of the dash, which is something I don't want to do. You've got to crank up the sound system to be louder than the headers anyway.

Subject: Re: Archaic Storage Media Sermon
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 04 Feb 2004 19:14:40 GMT
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I must be very lucky then since my 40 year old vinyl still seems to sound better than the new CD's, maybe it's cognitive dissonance but it sure sounds good! I think I see some flow marks though.

Subject: Go to the swap meet

Posted by Dean Kukral on Wed, 04 Feb 2004 19:39:44 GMT
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Go to the Swap Meet. drguayo has a deal you can't refuse!

Subject: Re: Go to the swap meet
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 05 Feb 2004 12:45:38 GMT
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Sure, 2500 copies of Saturday Night Fever and how can you hurt a vinyl album tracking at 6 grams, the bass is great!

Subject: Re: Archaic Storage Media Sermon
Posted by GarMan on Tue, 10 Feb 2004 15:44:30 GMT
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CD and DVD are not final either. Especially the cheap read/write disks. I heard that the aluminum coating used to capture data on the R/W disks have a life of only 10 to 50 years.

Subject: Re: Archaic Storage Media Sermon
Posted by Dean Kukral on Tue, 10 Feb 2004 21:56:37 GMT
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Absolutely!Nobody really knows. It depends on whether or not leakage occurs.However, it does not really matter. You still have to transfer stuff to the latest medium. For example, cd's are beginning to be replaced by dvd's, which are pretty much backward-compatable today, but for how long?? But dvd's will have a very short history to write, as they are soon going to be replaced by high-density and multi-level dvd's. What's next? Maybe ultraviolet or xray or some other RF device with a very short wave length capability...It will not do you any good to have a perfect quality cd if there is nothing to read it with.