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Handling New Media
Fall 2006
Assignment #2

DIGITAL STORAGE MEDIA

Media Format: 5 1/4" floppy disk format, a magnetic disk recording medium. Also known as 5 1/4" "flexible diskette" or "minifloppy."

Media Type: (Disk, tape or solid state) Disk.

Date Introduced: (year) 1976, 1978.

Dates in Use: (years): 1976-late 1980s.

Dimensions: 5 1/4" (13.3 cm) by 5 1/4"

Capacity: There were three types of 5 1/4" floppy disks made. Single Side, with a capacity of 160 kilobyte (KB)

5.25" Double Side, 360 kilobyte (KB) capacity

5.25" Double Side High Density, 1.2 megabyte (MB) capacity.

These densities are not compatible.

Media Variations and/or Identifying Features:

The disks can be hard or soft-sectored, and effects which drive

The different capacities mentioned above can be identified by

Common Manufacturers/Brands:

Shugart Associates, Radio Shack, Apple

Associated Hardware: (playback) a 5 1/4" floppy disk drive.

Associated Software: Software compatible with the formats contained on the disk must be present on the computer which the files will be uploaded to, and downloaded from in order for the data to be retrieved. See conservation issues.

Primary Usage: The storage of small files such as documents or simple graphics, meant to be a portable media.

Risks: The presence of strong magnetic fields, bending, dirt and dust, or any improper or unavailable drivers for the appropriate operating systems will render any reading of the media impossible.

Condition Assessment: The floppy disks are bendable plastic, and the information is found inside, on round plastic coated with magnetic oxide particles. The disks are enclosed in a plastic jacket. 5 1/4" floppy disks feature a "write-enable" slot on the upper right corner. This can be covered with a sticky tab to disable this function.

Conservation Issues: As with other magnetic media such as videotape, these disks are subject to "sticky shed" syndrome, or binder hydrolysis, and therefore not recommended for long term storage situations. There is also a greater possibility for the introduction of dirt, dust and other debris onto the data-carrying magnetic head because one section of the floppy is open. These disks are obsolete, no longer available from manufacturers, so reformatting decisions would have to be made about the proper media to store data retrieved from the disk. 5 1/4" floppy disk drives are also no longer manufactured, which presents the issue of simple retrieval of information from the floppy disk. Many early forms of the 5 1/4" floppy did not feature any markings to distinguish single-density from double-density. In fact, many were marketed as single-density, when in fact both sides of the magnetic disk were coated.

<http://www.computerhope.com/help/floppy.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floppy_disk

<http://www.tpub.com/neets/book23/103.htm>

http://webworld.unesco.org/safeguarding/en/all_magn.htm