

5: RamWorks RamDrive™

Introduction to RamDrive™

RamDrive is nothing more than a program which allocates all or a specified portion of RamWorks extended memory (RAM) to be used as one or more "solid-state" disk drives. This program loads itself into a special reserved area of the //e's memory and uses a portion of the RamWorks memory to store desired programs and files in "disk format". This "tricks" the computer into thinking that it is accessing a disk drive when it is actually retrieving or storing data in memory.

Increased data access speed and potentially greater disk storage capacity make the RamDrive a convenient, low cost alternative to a hard-disk drive. Loading from and saving to a RamDrive can be as much as 20 times faster than a conventional disk drive because it eliminates the mechanical activity that a conventional drive has to perform. The RamDrive data storage capacity depends upon the amount of memory available on your RamWorks.

RamDrive is compatible with almost all DOS 3.3 applications available for the Apple //e. You can load any programs or data files which are not copy-protected into a RamDrive and run or access them just like from any other disk drive. A disk which cannot be duplicated with a standard copy program, like COPYA or FID, are probably copy protected. Although, some copy-protection schemes will allow you to copy the program files from the floppy disk to a hard disk or RamDrive, they do not allow you to copy them to another floppy disk. Due to the rising popularity of hard disk drives and RAM drive software, most software publishers are offering copyable upgrades to their previously copy-protected programs. Check with the software publisher or dealer from whom you purchased the software for details.

RamDrive is a volatile storage medium. Since information stored in a RamDrive is actually stored in RamWorks memory, when the computer is turned off, the information in the RamDrive disappears. This means you will have to save the data you want to keep to a regular disk drive before you turn the computer off.

Proceed with Caution! Be careful how you use RamDrives. Although the use of emulated disk drives can appreciably speed up those programs that require frequent disk access, RamDrives can be tricky to use and potentially hazardous to your data. Keep Murphy's Law in mind when you weigh the advantages and disadvantages of using RamDrive software.

The ProDOS version of RamDrive, ProDrive, and its utilities are on side one of the Super Desktop Expander disk. Side two of the Super Desktop Expander disk contains the DOS 3.3 version of RamDrive and its special utilities. This chapter explains the installation, configuration, and use of these programs and utilities.