Transoniq Hacker

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Putting Zip into your EPS/ASR

Garth Hjelte

For almost a couple years now, I've been using a ZipDrive in place of the floppy in my ASR-10 keyboard and our ASR-10 rack at the RCS studios. I'm happy to report that it works great! The ease of use of just setting up a keyboard at a gig site and only carrying a power cord and sustain pedal is truly freeing.

Not only that, we've done it to our ASR-X, too! We'll do an article on that soon.

I'd like to share with you how it can be done. Some of the work (the cabling) can be avoided by buying our Internal ZipDrive Kit that I have made available through RCS.

And also, I'd like to express my appreciation to Daryl Daughters, who wrote the first internal hard drive article in the *Hacker* back in 1992 (Issue #83). I'll repeat the relevant information here, but the article is good reading nonetheless. (In my opinion, it was one of the Top 5 *Hacker* articles.)

This month we'll focus on the EPS/ASR mod. Next month we'll go over the ASR-X mod.

Warning-Disclaimer-Call To Arms

This modification will void the Ensoniq warranty on your 'board — but hey, you probably don't have one anymore anyway.

Parts List

25-pin ribbon cable
50-pin ribbon cable
DB-25 female jack
1 IDC 50-pin male connector
Other connector parts to adapt the 25-pin to 50-pins

Basics

Daryl's article talked about installing a small 2.5" fixed hard drive within a 16-Plus. You had to 1) install the hard drive into the 16-Plus case, 2) install a power supply in the case, 3) convert the 25-pin output to the 50-pin jack of the SCSI drive, and 4) wire up the power supply. It was a intermediate to advanced task.

The ASR-10 doesn't have that room — especially in the keyboard. But along has come another, perhaps better, alternative.

A commercially internal ZipDrive (what Iomega calls the "SCSI Insider") has the same dimensions as a floppy drive. It also has the same power requirements — 5V, 1.7A load. Iomega has a goal of replacing the floppy drive in the computer industry (if they avoid all the lawsuits — but that's another story...).

So here's the scheme — replace the floppy drive with the Internal ZipDrive — thus there's no need to mount the hard drive in the case, and no need for mounting a power supply.

INSTALLATION

Phase 1 — Installing The ZipDrive

On a EPS/ASR keyboard, the floppy drive is pretty jammed in there. There are 4 screws holding it in, but there is a certain amount of pressure the top panel places on the drive. I had to take mine out backwards — but perhaps mine was built differently. Anyway, just take the floppy out. Remove the 37-pin ribbon cable connecting the floppy drive up to it's internal controller — BTW, the ASR-10 doesn't require a floppy for operation (see below for the trade-offs).

Important: Don't think you can hook the ZipDrive up to the floppy controller — not even a IDE ZipDrive. It's not the same thing. Instead, we need to hook the SCSI ZipDrive up to the SCSI Interface, using some special cabling.

In This Issue ...

Articles:

Putting Zip into your EPS/ASR
Garth Hjelte ..... cover

An Introduction to Fizmo
Eric Montgomery 4

ASR Sampling and Tracking on the Fly: Song-Building Strategies — Part II
Phil Rogers 5

Regular Stuff:

Random Notes 2
Hypersoniq 2
Transoniq-Net 4
The Interface 7
Classifieds 9
Hacker Booteeq 11

This newsletter is stopping publication November, 1999 (Issue #173).

Issues remaining: **9**

If your address label indicates more than 9 issues remaining, please let us know if we need to work something out with back issues or something.

If your label indicates less than 9 — not to worry: a partial-year renewal notice will be sent about the same time as your second-to-last issue.

It's a tight fit — Ensoniq doesn't give you much tolerance. Watch out for the aluminum fitting around the faceplate — this can get squashed off if you are not careful.

Putting the ZipDrive in a rack is much easier. Remove the floppy with the holding screws and simply pull it out, and replace it with the ZipDrive. For both keyboard and rack units, put the floppy power supply mini-Molex connector on.

Phase 2 — SCSI Wiring

Internally, an ASR-10 w/ SCSI has a SCSI PCB board with a 25-pin output. A short ribbon cable goes from that to the DB-25 SCSI output jack. The idea is to tap into the SCSI chain at this point — route a longer 25-pin ribbon cable to tap into the ZipDrive, and continue to route it back out to a new DB-25 output jack.

However, special cabling is required since the ZipDrive, like most other SCSI Devices, has a 50-pin SCSI connection. Basic SCSI only requires 25 pins, but 50-pin connectors are used on most SCSI devices, probably for the reason that higher level SCSI protocols, like SCSI-2, SCSI-2, Ultra-Wide, etc., use all/most of the 50-pins.

Daryl's research applies regarding a custom 25-to-50-to-25 cable — below is the pin-outs of the 25-pin jack of the SCSI board, and what pins to apply them to on the 50-pin connector of the ZipDrive.

SCSI-Bus Pin Assignments
[TH — From Issue #83.]

Disk Drive Pin #	Ensoniq Pin #	Function
2	8	Data Bit 0
4	21	Data Bit 1
6	22	Data Bit 2
8	10	Data Bit 3
10	23	Data Bit 4
12	11	Data Bit 5
14	12	Data Bit 6
16	13	Data Bit 7
18	20	Data Bit P
20	n/c	Ground
22	n/c	Ground
24	n/c	Ground
25	n/c	n/c
26	25	Term Pwr
28	n/c	Ground
30	n/c	Ground
32	17	ATN
34	n/c	Ground
36	6	BSY
38	5	ACK
40	4	RST
42	2	MSG
44	19	SEL
46	15	C/D
48	1	REQ
50	3	I/O
31,35,37	7	(Ground)*
39,41,43	9	(Ground)
1,3,5	14	(Ground)
7,9,11	16	(Ground)
13,15,17,21	18	(Ground)
45,47,49	24	(Ground)

* The ground connections shown are what were used on my cable. All of the ground pins are equivalent and some cables may use different pins. All odd-numbered disk drive pins are grounded at the drive, except pin 25 which is not connected (n/c).

The task here is to convert the 25-pin SCSI connections to a 50-pin style, and then back again as the SCSI signal is routed externally. Again, we have made available the custom cable and the installation instructions available through RCS, if you are not interested in building it yourself.

Connect the custom cable inside the EPS/ASR. Place the 25-pin ICB connector into the internal SCSI board, insert the 50-pin ICB connector into the ZipDrive, and screw on the new DB-25 into the back of the EPS/ASR. Use plastic clips to hold the cable in place. You might even want to drill a couple holes and build a brace to hold the heavier components. The ASR-Rack is the hardest beast — getting at the internal SCSI board requires you to take off the top motherboard — more screws to remove and replace.

Phase 3
Testing And Cleaning Up

Before you reassemble your EPS/ASR, test the drive and make sure it's running and ready to go. Put an Ensoniq-formatted ZipDisk with the OS in your ZipDrive, and turn on your sampler. Upon SEARCHING FOR SCSI DEVICES, the ZipDrive should blink, and the LOADING SYSTEM should come up, and your sampler with be reading to run. If this does not happen, check your connections, and perhaps reseat them as well. Once everything is OK, reassemble your EPS/ASR, and test again. Then you're ready to go!

Phase 4
Dealing With Tradeoffs

Although it's not the greatest "musical" gig, I play in my worship band at church, which is made up of mostly volunteers. I do it, not for a musical challenge (heavens!), but it's important for the life of the people at the church. And I want to sound good, so the ASR-10 fits the bill — but it also means running over on Wednesdays, setting up, breaking down, setting up on Sunday, breaking down, until I go nuts. The ease of setting up ONLY the keyboard has really saved the day for me — it's like having a incredibly capable synth to lug around!

But there is some conveniences you give up by removing the floppy. For instance:

1) How do you write sounds to the ZipDrive, when there's no way of loading them in the first place?

2) You can only format a SCSI Drive within the EPS/ASR by booting up with a floppy — there's no floppy drive now.

These can be resolved by using a computer or another EPS/ASR (that has a floppy), you can transfer sounds and format carts. This could be friend's, or a music store's instrument — if you plan right, you can transfer all your sounds at one time. Both the RCS Tools programs or the Giebler EDM (for the PC), or EPSm for Mac, support Ensoniq SCSI Devices.

A neat little trick enables you to format cartridges without booting up on floppy: Have 1 formatted blank ZipDisk w/OS handy. Boot up with it, then use the COPY SCSI DRIVE function. When it prompts you INSERT SOURCE DISK, use that ZipDisk. When it prompts you to INSERT DEST DISK, insert

Front Panel

RND (♪♪)

Advertiser News...

Opti-case has a new web site (or at least new to us): www.opti-case.com.

Plus, we'd like to welcome DC Sound Devices to these pages. Something a little different from the usual — check out their ad on page 6. Or...

HYPERSONIQ
New Product Announcements

DC Sound Devices announces the *Guitar Whiz*. This product enables any keyboard player to play amazing guitar runs immediately at speeds their own guitarists will wish they could play (something many keyboardists have secretly wanted to do for years) as well as all chords. The company hopes to "expand any musician's repertoire to include the joy of playing, with skill, the most popular stringed instrument." Low-priced package ($24.95) includes video, comprehensive manual, revolutionary new "Chordmeister" device, and more. For more information, contact: DC Sound Devices, phone: 1-920-725-4850.

an non-Ensoniq-formatted ZipDisk. The EPS/ASR will recognize the cart as non-formatted, and prompt FORMAT AND ERASE DISK? Press Enter, and the EPS/ASR will format the ZipDisk, and then start the copying process. So you *don't* have to boot up with the floppy to format, really.

Couple other things to mention: There is such little tolerance for the floppy width, that sometimes a ZipDisk does not eject fully. A small screwdriver can easily pry it out. Car keys can't (I tried) — ZipDisks have an annoying "curve" that makes it hard. Overtime, this problem resolves itself, and the ZipDrive "naturally" works itself into place.

Also, be it blessed that the Iomega makes a standard form-factor internal version of the ZipDrive. Strangely, there are no SCSI Internal versions of ANY of the popular removable devices made — EZFlyer 230, Syjet, Nomai 540/750, EZ135. That's because of the computer industry that "drives" the drive makers — PC's are historically IDE based, and historically Mac (always SCSI) users use external devices. The EZ135 is an exception, since you can rip the drive part away from the case — and fit it into a 3.5 space. But it's not made anymore (and Syquest just declared bankruptcy).

Two other concerns have been brought up since we starting marketing the Internal ZipDrive at RCS. Will it void the warranty? Well, no official response from Ensoniq has ever been made on this subject, but I suppose it does. But as far as the EPS/ASR goes, it's most likely out of warranty for you anyway. Other concern: Is the floppy power supply adequate for the ZipDrive? Answer: YES! A common floppy drive draws about 1.5-2A, while the printed specs show the ZipDrive requires 5v 1.7A. And even if there is another consideration — hey, we've used ours about 6 hours a day for a year — hasn't caused a problem! And for the other kits we've sold — no problem there either.

This mod will work for 16-Plus owners as well. The only additional concern is that the 16-Plus will not work with most ZipDrives by itself, due to the more primitive nature of the 16-Plus SCSI Interface. Possible solutions:

1) Using another SCSI Drive in the chain. This will supply the term power needed to support the Zip.

2) Connecting a powered terminator (APS SCSI Sentry II, $69.95, 800-554-3943, 1009-018, available international through RCS) to the back of the 16-Plus.

3) Modifying the Ensoniq SP-1/2 SCSI so that it supports termination power (see Hacker article, or the RCS web site http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps/zip16pls.html).

4) Buying a SL-1 SCSI Interface — this is a 3rd-party EPS SCSI interface that supports the above modification (SoundLogic 800-753-6558, or RCS 800-8-PRO-EPS).

Lastly, the ZipDrive has some quirks — these have been mentioned in the *Hacker* pages before, but here's a brief summary:

1) Don't use the ZipTools disk (the one that comes with the ZipDrive) — it is write-protected. You can only take the protection off by formatting it in a computer.

2) You must have a formatted (any format) ZipDisk in the ZipDrive when the ASR boots up and does SEARCHING SCSI DEVICES. Otherwise, the ZipDrive and anything physically after it in the SCSI chain will not be seen by the EPS/ASR.

3) You must turn on any hard drive *before* you turn on the EPS/ASR (obviously the Internal mod is an exception, since the EPS/ASR turns it on itself).

Bio: *Garth Hjelte runs Rubber Chicken Software Co., a multi-national organization which exclusively supports Ensoniq samplers. It is no way affiliated with the UN.*

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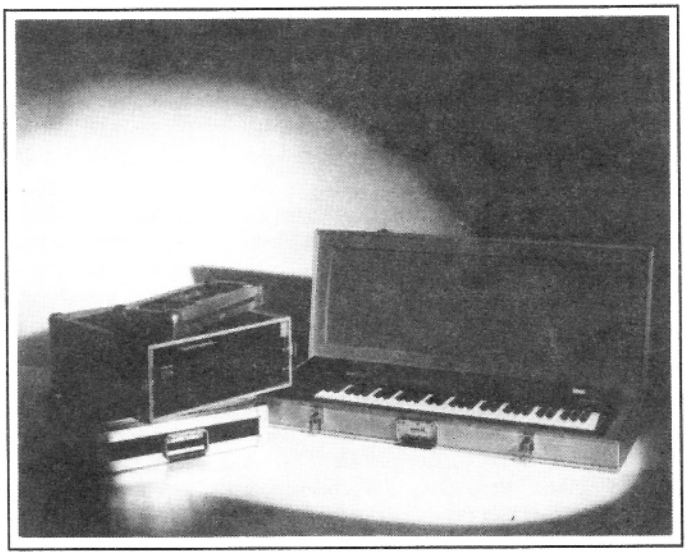

Shown: 4-space rack with EPS-16 PLUS module, 2-space rack, Eagle-I VFX-sd case

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An Introduction to Fizmo

Eric Montgomery

First, there was infinite nirvana, then a great explosion. From the great depths came a sonic realism of the future... FIZMO! Not that I believe all that nothingness stuff, but it sounded cool...

Ensoniq has released something that is old and new at the same time. Fizmo is what is known as a Real-time Transwave Synthesizer. I think we all have the real-time part figured out. Knobs! While you play or sequence with Fizmo you have plenty of knobs to turn (specifically the F. I. Z. M. and O. knobs) and experience really cool sonic changes or modulations. The "F" knob modulates effect parameters. "I" modulates the transwave start point (which frame plays first). "Z" changes the resonant filter cutoff. "M" is set to detune one layer from the other. "O" is set to system controller 4, the wild card! Normally it sweeps pitch, panning or volume, depending on the patch.

The Transwave synth part is a little more difficult to comprehend, even though it is a simple idea once you get the whole thing in perspective (it took me a while to get it). The User's Guide explains a Transwave like this — "Transwaves (originally introduced in the VFX) are waves composed of multiple sound recordings arranged one after another in "frames." These frames may be sonically related to each other to sound like an evolving or growing sound. In other cases the frames may not be related to give that touch of the unexpected. You can use modulation to control which frames will be heard when you play a note (remember the "I" knob?), resulting in all manners of dynamic timbral changes."

Fizmo has effects! Fizmo has 41 Insert effects presets that include several Reverbs, Chorus, Flange, Spinner, Digital Delay, Distortion, Pitch Detune, Chatter Box, Multitap Delays and multiple effects algo's (i.e. DDL>Chorus or Compression> DDL>Tremelo etc.). Fizmo has the coolest thing ever, a Vocoder! Not only do you find that Fizmo can do traditional synth sounds and new unheard textures, but it can be a vocoder. I know some of you are very excited now, but some might be saying, "What's a vocoder?" Have you ever heard of Roger Troutman and Zap? Teddy Riley? Or maybe Kraftwerk? A vocoder makes your voice sound electronic like a robot. You can shape sounds using your mouth by speaking or singing into a microphone that is connected to Fizmo's input. The User's manual explains a vocoder like this:

"A Vocoder (introduced in the '70s) is an interactive filter that allows you to shape the frequencies — treble content — of a preset using your mouth. When a preset that uses the vocoder effect is selected you can speak into a microphone that is connected to the audio input of Fizmo and play the keys at the same time. The keys you play will determine the pitch you hear, and your mouth determines the frequencies of the notes."

By now I think you have figured out that Fizmo is the ultimate culmination of old and new in one box. If that is the case, then one more item has to be mentioned... Arpeggiator! If you don't know, an arpeggiator is a part of the keyboard that when keys are played, notes playback repeatedly in certain pre-programmed patterns. There are 117 arpeggiator patterns that are all ready to play. Each of these patterns can do something I have never seen before in an arpeggiator, they can "swing." You can actually take a pattern and add "feel" so that you can get that hip-hop swing. Change the note duration, change the patterns to work in fourths or octaves, it is just the wildest thing that you have ever gotten into! I better mention that the arpeggiator can sync to incoming MIDI clock (it does it automatically!), and can even be sent out via MIDI to trigger external sound modules (like a MR Rack or an ASR-X/Pro) or can be sent to a MIDI sequencer.

Fizmo has 61 velocity sensitive keys with aftertouch, 20 bit D-A conversion, 44.1K sample playback rate, 128 ROM sounds, 64 presets, and 48 voice polyphony. Fizmo is 4-part multitimbral, has 41 Insert Effects, a separate global reverb and much more. Fizmo is truly a keyboard for all types of uses. You can make up some patches to emulate an old sci-fi movie's sound effects or some futuristic noises. Create sounds that emulate other analog pieces to go for the classic rock era in sounds. You can make some phatt bass, leads, pads, and freaky sounds for R&B, Dance, Hip-hop or Techno. Do some vocoder spoken or sung words; the sky is the limit. If you want to hear some sounds, spoken vocoder renditions, and a demo song I wrote, go to: www.ensoniq.com Click on: Musical Products and go to Fizmo. Click on Audio Demo.

Remember to make some funky music and think Emu<>Ensoniq! ▬

Bio: Eric has written music for Ensoniq, Christian record labels and two Contemporary Jazz solo projects.

Transoniq-Net
HELP WITH QUESTIONS

All of the *individuals* listed below are *volunteers*! Please take that into consideration when calling. If you get a recording and leave a message, let 'em know if it's okay to call back collect (this will greatly increase your chances of getting a return call).

All Ensoniq Gear – Ensoniq Customer Service. 10:00 am to noon, 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm EST Monday to Friday. 610-647-3930. Ensoniq's web site (www.ensoniq.com) can also be used to retrieve specs, OS info, hard-drive info, and the like.

All Ensoniq Gear – Electric Factory (Ensoniq's Australia distributor). E-mail address: elfa@ ozemail.com.au; their web site at http://www.ozemail.com.au/~elfa; or e-mail their resident clinician, Michael Allen, at mallen@geko.com.au. Phone calls, Business hours – Victoria. (03) 480-5988.

All Ensoniq Gear – The Electric Factory in New Zealand, phone (64) 9-443-5916, fax (64) 9-443-5893, or e-mail geoffm@ elfa.co.nz (Geoff Mason).

TS Questions – Pat Esslinger, Internet: pate @execpc.com, Compuserve: 74240,1562, or AOL: ESSLIP.

TS, VFX, and SD-1 Questions – Stuart Hosking, stuh@ozemail.com.au.

SD-1 Questions – Philip Magnotta, 401-467-4357, 4 pm – 12:30 EST.

VFX, SD32, and EPS-16+ Questions – Dara Jones, Internet: darajones@juno.com or call 214-361-0829.

SD-1, DP/4, ASR-10 Questions – John Cox, 609-888-5519, (NJ) 5pm – 8 pm EST weekdays. Any time weekends.

SQ-80, VFX Questions – Robert Romano, 607-898-4868. Any ol' time (within reason) EST.

Hard Drives & Drive Systems, Studios, & Computers – Rob Feiner, Cinetunes. 914-963-5818. 11am–3pm EST. Compuserve: 71024,1255.

EPS, EPS-16 PLUS, & ASR-10 Questions – Garth Hjelte. Rubber Chicken Software. Call anytime. If message, 24-hour callback. (320) 235-9798. Email: chickenEPS@willmar.com.

EPS/MIRAGE/ESQ/SQ-80 M.U.G. 24-Hour Hotline – 212-465-3430. Leave name, number, address. 24-hr Callback. Email: G4Prod@aol.com.

SQ/KS/KT, SD-1, SCSI, MR, ZR, Emu & hard drive Questions – Pat Finnigan, 317-462-8446. 8:00 am to 10:00 pm EST.

ESQ-1, MIDI & Computers – Joe Slater, (404) 925-8881. EST.

ASR Sampling and Tracking on the Fly

Song-Building Strategies Using a Large Memory Storage Device — Part II

Phil Rogers

[TH – Part I appeared in Issue #163.]

Of course, the inevitable problem will happen if your creative juices start you sequencing, then later you have to combine certain of your instruments together in order to free up tracks to load in new instruments and sounds. At that point you will have to start tweaking your track data, and this can get messy if you don't organize your thoughts first.

For each instrument/track that you will be copying to a different instrument/track location, you will have to perform several operations, and in the following order. Before copying layers, after making sure the layer is [no pitch], and the root key for the source layer has been changed to C4, change the range of each wavesample (edit: pitch, one ws at a time) so that the sounds made by the layer that you are going to copy won't impinge on the key ranges of any of the layers of the destination instrument, i. e. the one to which you will be copying the layer to.

It is easiest and less confusing to move each wavesample an octave or a multiple of octaves above or below their present ranges, if possible. All you have to do for each wavesample, once you're on the [edit: pitch: wavesample range] page is to play the key, lower and then upper, where you want that wavesample to move to on the keyboard. Make sure the lower of the two notes is underlined first on the page: if you get them reversed, then the lower point of your wavesample range will be above the higher point, and you won't hear anything.

After you've adjusted the range of each of the wavesamples of the layer, play the sequence, and you probably won't hear the instrument on which you're working playing at all, or it will only be playing a smaller range of what you are used to hearing. At this point, you can copy the entire layer [command: layer: copy layer] to the destination instrument/track location.

Still working with the source instrument/track location, the next step is to go to [command: track: transpose track], and transpose the track up or down the same amount you have moved the layer's wavesample ranges: e.g., one octave down has a value of -12 (12 half-steps in an octave). So if you raised your wavesample ranges three octaves, you'll have to perform this operation three times for this track, as the values only go up to 12 (= one octave). Now hit play, and you should hear your source instrument in the mix again, just as it sounded originally.

Now we're ready to copy the source track data to the new location; actually to merge this track data with anything that is already on the destination track, using [command: track: merge two tracks].

After doing that, play the sequence again, and it will sound a little askew because the track data we just copied/merged is now playing in both its old (source) and new (destination) track locations: it will be noticeably louder and possible seem a bit chorused, but that is good because it lets us know that the merge we just performed actually did work.

Now return to the source instrument/track and delete the track data so the sequence will sound "normal" again [command: track: erase/undefine track].

Finally, and here's where we again have to be relatively organized (sometimes pencil and paper are a good idea here), you'll have to perform the last sequence of three moves (transpose; merge; erase/undefine) for each and every sequence that the source track/instrument was in the mix in your song so far.

You can find out which sequences you need to do this for, if you don't want to rely solely on your ears and memory, by going to (edit: track) and scrolling to the page that shows which instruments are playing on a given sequence — make sure you aren't on the song tracks page though, as the sequence tracks don't bleed through, so you won't find what you need to know.

After you have done all these operations, listen to the entire song to make sure everything sounds as it should. At that point, you can delete the instrument that is in the location where the source track used to be, then load new sounds/instruments there to continue the experiment of building the ensemble of the song. Eventually, you will have all of the sounds you need (for this more than usually complex song), and your tracks will sound well-mixed enough for you to save the bank. I might add that if you have daily access to 64-tracks of ADAT and a synchronizer, all these manipulations won't be necessary, as you can just dump a track or even stereo pair of each type of drum (with all its attendant hits) to one or more ADAT tracks.

II. Organizing Your Other Sound Libraries for Easy Auditioning

Since I was an original-EPS user for many years before finally moving up to the ASR-10 early in 1996, I had accumulated an enormous amount of sounds from the Ensoniq libraries, the freeware which the Ensoniq sales reps distributed at the music stores, and third party sound developers such as Rubber Chicken and affiliates, Keel, Cesium, and Greytsounds. Although it took an extraordinary amount of time, I felt I needed to organize all this so that I had all the best and most useful sounds saved in directories on Zip disks. Then if I needed a trumpet; I could go to the trumpet sub-directory and audition all the good ones quickly. It seemed to make a lot of sense for the long haul, plus would save much time and the aggravation of shuffling around through probably more than five hundred floppy disks. Even if I had invested in the CD-ROM replacements for the Ensoniq libraries, I'd still be jumping around all over the place trying to audition sounds, as similar sounds often aren't in the same directory or on the same CD-ROM disk, and there are all the public domain and third party sounds (still on floppies) to sift through as well.

First, on the computer, I made a blank spreadsheet for each kind of instrument (e.g. electric guitars were assigned, though

somewhat loosely, as to their usefulness in either pop/jazz, funk, or harder rock genres, with a short listing for country; trap drum kits and drum machines were jazz, rock, funky, or techno... you get the idea.

There would be a few instruments that might end up on more than one list; there were a couple of lists titled "multi-purpose," for instance, synthesizer patches which may include a bass, a clav, a pad and/or a brass sound in the same instrument). Each blank sheet had a place at the top to write in the type of instrument (e.g. electric guitars) as well as subtype or style (e.g. funk), and underneath that, several columns for instrument name, number of blocks, source (e.g. SLT-10, CDR-9, Keel, PD, Anderton 2), a narrow column for each patch select, and general comments (which would frequently run on to the next line, if, for instance, it was one of Ensoniq's multiple ethnic percussion kits, for which I would name or abbreviate the names of all of the types of drums and small percussion contained in the kit. Also if the instrument was incredible in some way, or was a reject, this is where I would explain how and why).

At the front of the line (i.e. on the left) devoted to each instrument, I would draw a star if I felt the instrument was a good one, sometimes 2 or more stars if I felt it was exceptional. Then later when I got around to building the Zip disk libraries, I would know only to save the ones with at least one star next to their names.

A lot of instruments didn't get stars; it was ten months later that I finally got around to building the disk directories and saving the starred instruments to them. I did load up some of the non-starred items (e.g. the ones with provocative names), to re-check, and sure enough, I still felt almost all of the original rejects were still clunkers. I ended up fitting all of my best woodwinds, brass and acoustic keyboards (with approximately 60,000 blocks devoted to each) on one Zip disk, with the exception of one stereo accordion from EMU's Carnaval box that clocked in at a massive 15,000 blocks. Once I get this all done (hopefully in just a few more days), I'll be ready to roll, with no excuse to keep me watching the boob tube instead of getting creative. I can hardly wait. ▬

Bio: *Phil Rogers, who lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, composes in a wide variety of genres, including world beat, early and modern classical, tribal/shamanic chants, and folk; on a number of occasions, he has been known to venture into the more humorous forms of hip-hop. Most recently he completed music for a couple of video documentaries about Peru, and has been working in conjunction with one of the area's better choreographers.*

Call For Writers!

In spite of their current god-like status, writers for the *Hacker* were once mere mortals — just like you! If you're noodling around with Ensoniq gear, you too can join their elite ranks. We're always looking for new writers, and yes, there is actual payment involved. If you're toying with an idea for an article, how about giving Editrix Jane a call at 1-503-227-6848 and listening to her soothing words of encouragement?

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The Interface

Letters for The Interface may be sent to any of the following addresses:
U.S. Mail - The Interface, Transoniq Hacker, 1402 SW Upland Dr., Portland, OR 97221
Electronic mail - Internet: interface@transoniq.com. In many cases a quick answer can be obtained by posting to our interactive, on-line Interface at our Web site (http://www.transoniq.com/interface.html) or calling Ensoniq CS at 610-647-3930.
This is probably one of the most open forums in the music industry. Letter writers are asked to please keep the vitriol to a minimum. Readers are reminded to take everything with a grain of salt. Resident answer-man is Pat Finnigan (PF). Letter publication in the printed version of TH is subject to space considerations.

TH –

I was really ticked when I read your "Slight Change in Direction" notice.

I have been a faithful believer in Ensoniq since the Mirage. I always talk up Ensoniq products to every musician I meet. I currently have a TS-12 that I bought when they first came out and am very happy with it. Actually, I don't think that Ensoniq has come up with another keyboard as nice as that since. Yes, the memory is larger and the sounds are a little more realistic on the new ones, but they have taken major steps backward in the user interface. I use my TS-12 almost exclusively for live performance. The new ones do not allow you to EASILY look for and then stage a new sound while you are playing and then switch to it smoothly without losing a beat. The new ones appear to be designed for the recording studio. Sorry guys, I am not impressed. And you ask why sales are down. My son also has a TS-12 that he is replacing but has not been impressed with the new offerings and will be going to another vendor.

With a little help from Rubber Chicken with more memory and some new sampled sounds I have not found ANY keyboard on the market that would draw me to spend real money on it.

Businesswise, where do these guys from EMU or rubber duckie have their heads anyway?? The whole idea behind a users' group and newsletter is to build a loyal community of customers who help each other overcome the shortcomings of their product and still be loyal anyway. You have provided a tool that anyone with a brain at Ensoniq should have jumped on. I guess we have the answer to that question.

I am disappointed to hear that the newsletter will be ending and that Ensoniq has taken a turn downward. Thanks for all of the info and the help you have provided over the years.

James M. Czebiniak
jimczebiniak@compuserve.com

[TH – You're very welcome. Thanks for the words of support. If the early reactions to FIZMO on rec.music.makers.synth are any indication (and they're frightfully consistent), well, let's just say that the Hacker probably isn't going to miss out on much of a recovery after all. And it's actually a bit of a relief to have things decided – the last couple years of being in "limbo" have been trying (and expensive). At least now we can get on with our lives. Find jobs or whatever...]

[PF – Jim: Megadittos. I don't think Ensoniq fully recovered from the never-released mixer OR the PARIS fiasco. Seriously, $3k for what the competition sells for $895? Somebody stick a fork in them...]

[DMusum7335@aol.com – Jim, You are absolutely right on several accounts. I also own a TS-12 and although some of the samples are better on the new keyboards, the TS-12's easy-to-use interface and versatility make it one of the best keyboards around. If you could take the TS-12, make it with 64-voice polyphony and the new samples and memory capacity of the ZR-76 at a reasonable price, I don't believe any keyboard could touch it. I've read so many times in the Interface from users who consistently applaud the TS-12, why would Ensoniq not listen? Like you, I have "bragged" about Ensoniq products to other musicians, but trust me, I have bought my last Ensoniq product. I can't believe they would not support a user interface like the Hacker. The new management philosophy stinks and it says something about the philosophical direction the company is taking. It certainly isn't the attitude of the old company. And who in the hell would buy (or make for that matter) a keyboard called FIZMO ??? What does that tell you? – Delaware Dave]

[Robert Kachur (jingle1@voyager.net) – Hello,

Well as already mentioned, I also will also miss this source of worthwhile information. Many personal what-ifs and scenarios of how to avoid problems have been generated over the years by this publication. Especially in dealing with SCSI and bizarre equipment and software problems. Ensoniq would have never reached the level of status or achieved the customer following had it not been for the many customers who shared the same dream. Equipment that would eventually perform as promised and in the process stimulate creativity. A devoted following that knew it could be done and pointed out problems which would make it easier for their next customer to not even have to deal with since a fix was on its way. This was the vehicle the Hacker *provided. Kurzweil had a forum on the internet but has since chosen to discontinue it due to what they call a lack of bandwidth. It appears large companies can no longer tolerate constructive negative feedback even if it works out for the good or enhancement of the products they currently have to market. There is no greater test lab than a place where the customer can go to learn more about their equipment and share experiences and problems. An autogenerated FAQ is not a form of receiving customer feedback.]*

[TH – It may not be so global as "large companies" – it seems like the software industry is just really starting to ramp up on the whole "open source" philosophy as a way to design systems.]

TH –

When did the paradigm shift occur wherein an industry that proffers a product as personal as a musical instrument decides that placing a notification/subscription form for a users group in the box with their product became a liability? There is something very wrong here... not just with the arbitrary dismissal of a conduit for customer following, but also with the whole management approach that departs from any tradition that advances discourse and communication that taps directly their consuming public and reinforces that buying decision over and over again.

Lately, I am noticing great changes in industries, especially high-tech industries, in the customer service areas. Take Netscape, for instance. I once purchased a scanner that decimated my Netscape browser in an attempt (I suspect but cannot prove) to force me to upgrade to a newer Microsoft operating system. One call to a toll-free number at Netscape got me to a support tech who recited 13 file changes that the scanner software disrupted and restored the browser good as new. Okay... that was two years ago. Now? If you can even FIND a phone number it's like $15 a minute or something if they'll even answer their phones. These things can be difficult indeed and I sure wouldn't want to deal with the public either, but how much support MUST the manufacturer offer before the customer decides that they can confidently make the purchase? As the levels of complexity increase so too should the support, but instead the industries don't want to staff it and are trying to remain competitive by NOT delivering support.

If Emu-Ensoniq thinks that the *Hacker* generated more demand for support they should consider the thousands of tech issues that have been resolved in lieu of their staff's attention. As far as the negatives reported through these pages, I think that is a big red herring being cited by management so as to justify the diminution of services. Yet I must sympathize with manufacturers too, because every time a new device, software or hard, is released there is a whole new set of compatibility issues. The *Hacker* forum fielded those well too because its reader/writer base often has savvy owners willing to help us techno-slouches. As a Bachelor's degreed manager of over twenty years I am vitally curious about the rationale of this "tough" decision. Alas, I am only an old customer and I'm not a bigtime one either, having purchased only my beloved EPS-16 Plus.

The *Transoniq Hacker* is free customer R&D that lets the customer realize a "feel-good deal." It is a mistake to throw that away.

J.D. Ryan
brosryan@dmv.com

[Margaret Sison (mcsison@earthlink.net) – Yes, very well put!]

TH –

I had just purchased an **ASR-X**. This machine needs... in many ways, and all of a sudden the red box? Only two months after my purchase and the same exact price! I have only had Ensoniq samplers since EPS, Mirage, EPS-16, and ASR-10. I now feel like I sat with Judas! Ensoniq move over – the SP 808 will outgroove you. Bad move, you lose a 8-year fan for lack of upgrade on a poor machine already replaced by another. Reminds me of certain video game systems.

Mike George
HERETIK777@webtv.net

[PF – Mike: Pretty shagadelic, huh? At least Nintendo still makes cartridges for the NES and the Super Nintendo.]

Howdy Hackers!

Got a Mirage question. Every time I try to use my **Mirage** as a MIDI slave with my PC, the Mirage shuts off and reboots, loading up whatever sounds are on the disk, then responds to the PC normally. I take it this isn't supposed to happen. Any idea what's wrong? My other synths don't have this problem.

P.S. I used to think my drive was going bad... Turned out I had a couple of chips loose on the circuit board, so ALWAYS make sure your chips are firmly seated before trying to replace your drive or other drastic measures!

Thanks in advance!

Dean Nye
Denver, CO
Dubmaniac@aol.com

[PF – Dean: Check the Mirage to ensure that Sysex or Patch Change via MIDI is OFF. I had a similar experience with an EPS hooked up to a computer: when in record, I'd press patch buttons to change sounds. On playback, the computer sent the EPS patch change messages that forced the EPS to load sounds from its hard drive, which, as we all know, mutes the outputs.

If that's not the problem, check the power supply for loose regulators: I've fixed more than a few Mirages where the +5 or +12V regulators came unsoldered from the power supply PCB. Good luck!]

TH –

As a long-time Ensoniq user (and *Hacker* subscriber and contributor), I can only say how disappointed I was to read about "Emu-soniq's" decision to no longer support the *Hacker*. There's no better indication of the loyalty of Ensoniq's customer base than the fact that for all these years users have researched its products and shared their knowledge with others. I've received the other manufacturers' newsletters, and the self-promotion aspect is so obvious that it really gets in the way of whatever information the authors are trying to convey. The *Hacker's* unbiased viewpoint is what makes it different, and I guess to a big company like Creative/Emu, that's not being a good corporate citizen. It's always regrettable when an excellent open forum like the *Hacker* loses the support it needs. I believe I speak for most subscribers when I say that if the "slight change in direction" that Eric and Jane wrote about in issue number 161 does cause the demise of the *Hacker*, we readers and writers will be losing something valuable, but Ensoniq will lose something more valuable – a loyal customer base. This isn't a threat, just a prediction.

Joe Travo
Visalia, CA

[DMusum7335@aol.com – Joe Travo, a couple of years ago you mentioned in an article that you had a sleigh bell patch for the VFX. Think I could get the specs for that since it is Christmas time?]

TH –

Ray Charles wrote and recorded a song about 25 years ago called *"I hate to be the one to tell you so but I told you so."* I told you months ago that Ensoniq lost its direction and the events following this only reinforce my beliefs.

The introduction of the ZR-76 was an insult to every person who bought an MR version of the same thing. The ASR-X or whatever you want to call it is the exact same thing, an insult to the ASR-10 folks. They can kiss my grits!!!! I sold my ASR-10 and bought a Kurzweil 2500sr and have moved on to a new level. You can fool some of the people some of the time but you can't fool all the people all the time. Their time is coming. Your newsletter was the best thing about Ensoniq and made the product unique as you could constructively talk about each product and not only hear from the company but get honest feedback from others with a common interest.

I bought three MR-76s for Circus Circus, here in Las Vegas, and used them 12 hours a day for the past two years. They are good instruments and could have evolved into better instruments. One of the MR's crashed finally and we bought a ZR-76 to replace it. It's the same old thing with only a couple of new knobs to confuse you plus it's just like the old MR's in that they are a real pain to use as a controller if your sequencing on the computer.

I just want to thank you for your great effort and know that you'll be successful in any endeavor that you guys attempt. I would recommend that you tell Ensomnia to drop dead. Your faithful subscribers will always be there. In your last issue, tell us what you really want to say about them. I know that I'll never buy another one of their products because you can't trust them and trust is the most important thing when your spending a lot of money for an instrument. Next thing you know they'll be merging with AOL and Netscape and start producing kiddie modules, under 500 bucks for yuppies.

Good Luck,
Bill Callanan,
Las Vegas, Nevada
BCallan369@aol.com

[John Bolles, Allegra Recording Company – Hi TH,

No one disagrees that Ensoniq's marketing plans can turn on a dime, or that it was a rotten thing to ditch the Hacker. The issue is whether or not this behavior rises to the level of impeachment. Whoops, sorry – got confused for a minute.

Well, I'm kind of on the fence, and the sides of the fence are "Ensoniq customer/TH subscriber" and "business realist." I own three Ensoniq keyboards, an SQ-80, an SD-1, and a KT-76. I still like and use all of them. There is no better combination of features, sound quality,and usability that I have found. Overall, the instruments have been reliable, and when they weren't, Ensoniq customer service has been very responsive to my needs. Nevertheless, I made up my mind some time ago not to buy another Ensoniq product. I agree with the TH subscriber who wrote in to the Interface that Ensoniq changes direction "like a fart in the wind." Well put. I still remember the VFX that would "never" have an on-board sequencer. The Hacker and this little community we've created here were what kept me interested in Ensoniq products.

However, if Ensoniq needs to change direction in order to survive, or to do whatever it has to do from a purely business standpoint, then – as disappointing as it might be – that's what they have to do. If they blow it, we will lose out on some of the best MI products around. All we'll gain is the transitory satisfaction of saying, "I told you so." But what if Ensoniq isn't wrong? What if they completely change direction and are a huge success? What if it turns out that trying to satisfy a loyal, but small, customer base is damaging them? Hey, dude, "If you love someone, set them free."

Jane, Eric, and Steve Vincent, it's been great "interfacing" with you. I hope the next year is a good one for everybody.]

[TH – Might very well be true. Like we said in our announcement, "They gotta do what they gotta do." But, on the other hand, their reasons *(as told to us) don't seem to make a lot of sense. And their history over the last few years certainly leads one to question some of their choices. (Unless, of course, they actually* wanted *to sell less units...) Anyway, for the most part this has been a pretty darn good experience – and it's a bit of a relief to at least have the direction set after the last couple of years of being in limbo.]*

Hi!

I passed my **ASR-10** to my youngest son (15) and I wonder if the Musician's Manual that came with the sampler exists also in other languages than English. German or French perhaps. If so, could you please indicate where I could get it?

Many thanks.

John PISSINGER
Luxembourg
nordli@pt.lu

[PF – John: You'll have to try Ensoniq directly. eMail to music-support@ensoniq.com or call 610.647.3930 (vox) to see if they have any left...]

TH –

For some strange reason, my **ASR-10** keyboard just started to only read DD floppy disks instead of HD disks. When I try to load an HD disk, it gives me a "DISK NOT FORMATTED" error. What gives? Luckily, it still boots from my ZIP drive OK, but is this a floppy drive problem, or is it internal? This means it won't even read my 3.53 OS disk from Ensoniq... or any of my HD sound libraries for the ASR-10.

Matthew C. Chinn
theoryc@netwide.net
Orlando

[PF – MattC: Either the floppy drive is dirty or defective. Use a commercially available 3.5" floppy disk drive cleaner from a computer store (Best Buy, Radio Shack, etc.). If that doesn't do the trick take the instrument to an Authorized Ensoniq Service Center to see if the drive is actually bad or a cable or other problem is rearing its head. Often when a disk gets stuck in a drive and "coerced" out, either the upper head gets yanked out of alignment or outright pulled loose from its mount. So before this scenario lands on your ASR, let your music store tech have a looksee first...]

Dear Hackers,

I have been happily sequencing for years on my **VFX-sd**. I also have an **ASR-10** as a module. Everything was fine until I got an electronic drumset (Roland PM16, circa 1987, and self-made drum pads). I want to record my drum pad performance into my VFX-sd sequencer and hear the ASR-10 drum samples as I play, then play the drum samples from the sequencer after I have recorded them. I have tried all the different MIDI parameters on both the keyboards, but I cannot hear the samples as I play the pads. (The sequencer does record my pad playing and does play back the samples afterward, though.) Do I need a MIDI merge box? If I do, maybe I'll just upgrade to a TS-10 and load the samples in it. Anybody have one for sale (or trade for my VFX-sd)?

Thanx so much, TH, for all those years of being there. I was deeply saddened after reading the bad news.

James Samp
Fond du lac, WI

[PF – Jim: Ensure the VFX-SD drum track is set to MIDI In AND set to the same MIDI channel as the PM16. At this point you'll need to set the PM16's pads to correspond with the sounds (re: MIDI note #'s) you want them to play. Other than that, it's pretty straightforward. Took me about 15 minutes to set 3 different drum maps on my OctaPad to fire drum sounds on my SD-1...]

TH –

I just purchased a **ZR-76**, (YES, I am going to subscribe to the *Hacker*), and I have been pouring over the manual. I need to know how to convert the ZR's files to WAV or MIDI files. Can you suggest some software or can one or the other be done from the ZR?

ZZmn54@aol.com

*[PF – ZZmn: The MR/ZR series can read *.wav files out of the box. To fully utilize them you'll need an app like AWAVE that'll translate *.snd/*.aiff/etc. file formats to *.wav. MIDI ain't so easy, although the MR/ZR will punk *.mid files out of the box also...]*

Dear TH –

Sorry to read about you closing up shop, but when EMU-Ensoniq merged your publication was probably considered an influential source of disinformation and negative views by the new owners. In other words, do not "dis" the corporation who knows better than the users of the product. I could go on and write volumes about this but I won't.

I choose the **TS-12** because of two reasons: 1. The factory was a twenty-minute ride from the house and 2. Roy Elkins home was a twenty-five minute ride from the house. Without Roy's personal one-on-one instruction I would still be looking at my TS-12 collecting dust in the corner. However, I only scratched the surface and then Roy moved. Therefore, the Hacker became my source of info for my machine.

Are you thinking of setting up a user's group on the web for Ensoniq products after you stop the presses? Are there any TS-12 users out there in N.E. Pennsylvania that you know of? Will all issues of *Transoniq Hacker* publications be made available on the web?

The TS-12 has two AUX outputs. I would like to know how I could use these. I understand that only a dry signal source can be sent to these outputs. That is OK because I may want to process the sound further. What I want to do is send audio to all four outputs to tape – AUX 1, 2, and Main out 1, 2. Example: Guitar to Aux 1, Bass to Aux 2, Snyth to Main 1, Percussion Main 2. How do I do this?

On occasion, Hackerpatches are presented in your magazine but I have no idea what all those numbers mean. I do not understand the programming part of the TS-12 and I have not used this feature. How do I program the TS-12 with the patch? I really do not understand the user-friendly manual. Where can I get help?

Sincerely,
Louis Zack Jr.
263 Main Street
Dupont PA 18641

*[TH – Well, with regard to the user's group/back issue question: right now we're not really looking for a new way to do a whole lot more free work and/or give away all our past efforts – but, hey, we probably *will* keep selling those back issues for a while...*

We've included your complete mailing address in case other users in your area want to get in contact – sorry, we can't send their names and addresses out to you.]

[PF – Louis: Yeah, I remember the day when they told Roy he had to go, and he told them no, he had to go to Sonic Foundry to preside over a reputable corporation. He sits there still...

Anyway, to get a handle on using the AUX outs, you gotta make edits at the WAVE level. Yeah, you can assign some stuff thru the sequencer, but to really use the AUX outs you wanna dig into an instrument at its basest level and assign certain waves the AUX outs and others the MAIN outs (just for FX routing). It's very pick and choose, and only you can be the final guy to say "Yeah, I want kick to AUX1 routed to the outboard Wedge gate and snare to AUX2 to the Lexicon, etc., etc., but that's where it's at...]

Hello!

Thanx for a great mag – I am a subscriber!

I have one problem, and don't know where to start looking for the answer:

One disk I have says: BAD DEVICE ID! What can I do? I don't have a backup, and the disk is very important for me! Please help!

Karl Gilberg
karlhans@everyday.no

[PF – Karl: In a word, punt. Your data is gone, format the disk and see if you can use it for other data storage, 'cause whatever is on it is toast. Can't help that...

Gary Giebler's utilities can do some forms of data recovery, but it's around $50 a floppy disk and you get no guarantees.]

Dear people,

I am a happy owner of an **ESQ-1** version 2.30 but I have many questions and problems with its operational system:

The cartridge is one of the problems: once I insert it in place, the LDC display shows a confusion of different characters and it doesn't function at all.

Also, the Midi Status selector pad doesn't work right – it shows on the display an R4 and it doesn't function.

I do also want to know how I can upgrade the memory capacity to the highest level. And, if possible, to install a drive system into the ESQ-1 in order to record and load sequences through a 3.5 diskette or a CDROM.

And last, do you know somebody to contact for used items – an SQ-R Plus 32 voices, and a Mirage Multisampler (no keyboard), or a budget synthesizer rack version?

I contact you directly since there is no nearby Ensoniq dealer and no service for these instruments. I thank you very much in advance for your cooperation. I do really like a lot also the Hacker zine.

Thank you,
Mario Cabezas
florezvelez@emcali.net.co

[PF – Mario: Answers, in order:

(A) The ESQ-1 has been as OS rev 3.5 since 1991. Hello?

(B) Install the SQX-70 Memory Expansion cartridge: this will bring the total sequence memory to 64K. That's as good as it gets for a 1988-series instrument.

(C) Hire an engineer to design a disk drive system for you. Ensoniq never did, and if you think anyone will go to that trouble for a 10-year-old instrument you're off the planet. Buy a used Mirage for $150, boot MASOS, and write all your ESQ-1 data via SysEx to it.

(D) Point your browser to used equipment auction places like www.sweetwater.com/tradingpost/ and the like. If you want used gear go to the auction places on the web...

(E) www.fatsnake.com/syntaur.]

TH –

Every time I try to save an **ESQ-1** sequence data with the **Mirage**, I get a Fn message. The disks are formatted and MAOOS is loaded. Could you help point me in the right direction to save sequences?

Thanks for your help,
Dave Stuart
Dave0313@aol.com Fri Dec 04 15:24:08 1998

[PF – Dave: Ensure you're running OS V. 3.5 on the ESQ-1 and MASOS V. 2.0 on the Mirage. It's been a little while, but I think you had to "handshake" the ESQ-1 with the Mirage (both MIDI ports connected to each other). Check with Syntaur Productions (www.fatsnake.com/syntaur) on the details. They remain the Mirage repository with Ensoniq's blessing...]

[PF – Dave: Just dawned on me: The Ensoniq Disk Formatting Utility returns an "Fn" in the display (Function #), so that may not be a MASOS disk you're booting up the Mirage with...]

TH –

Classifieds

TS-10 for sale, includes sound library of factory disks, case & shipping. $1200 or best offer. Hardly ever used. Call: 719-632-1218.

EPS Classic with custom case for sale. Original owner. Used in church a few times. Make an offer. Melody Laake, 515-225-8578 or mel@radiks.net.

Syjet hard drive, ASR compatible. 1.5 GB plus two 1.5-GB cartridges. (3 G total.) $230. Call: 912-476-0849, ask for Don.

Rubber Chicken Piano Pak (5 disks) and Bass Pak (10 disks) for ASR-10, ESQ EEPROM cartridge, ESQ cartridges: Voice 80, Vol. 1 & Cesium Sound, Yamaha TX81Z synth module. Best offers. 248-693-9497.

Wanted: CDR-2 and CDR-4 disks. Contact Delaware Dave at DMusum7335@aol.com.

For Sale: Ensoniq VFX. Excellent condition. Includes manual, softcase and original box. Original owner. Make reasonable offer. email: Dmusum7335@aol.com or phone Dave at 864-268-6275.

ASR-10R. Pristine condition. 16MB RAM, built-in SCSI. Includes original sound and OS disks plus backups, all manuals, original shipping carton, power cable, SW-10 double-pedal footpedal for patch selecting, external CD-ROM player with Chinon mechanism which has worked flawlessly, extra CD caddies, SCSI cable to connect external CD-ROM to ASR-10, Ensoniq CDR-7 sample CD-ROM, and several years of back issues of Hacker. $2100. (650) 225-7649 (W), (650) 359-8905 (H). randolph.mike@gene.com.

Help! Am willing to trade straight up my TS-12 (OS 3.10) w/case for a TS-10 w/case . Nerve damage in my right hand means switching to a nonweighted keyboard. Have 1000's of sounds and samples. Call: 516-471-6916, Al.

EPS Classic for sale! PS Systems 4X expander. 250+ floppies, with printed listing, of sounds. Excellent condition! $500. – Will separate w/case. Finale 3 – Notation Software. In box. Full documentation. $75 obo. Keith Mullin, 217-221-7267 days, 217-224-4036 nights, kmullin@harris.com.

FREE CLASSIFIEDS!

Well – within limits. We're offering free classified advertising (up to 40 words) for your sampled sounds or patches. Additional words, or ads for other products or services, are $0.25/ word per issue.

When I purchased my **ASR-10R**, thanks to my knowledge of the product, I purchased over the phone from a local music store so when I go in to pick it up I don't have to worry about sales pitches. Wrong. They went on so much about the value of the *Transoniq Hacker* and how cost efficient a subscription was you would have thought they sold *Hackers* not keyboards. After getting my first issue, I thought to myself "not bad."

Anyway, if the people at Creative can't understand the value, so be it. The good thing is that a group of people who effectively sustained the *Hacker* all these years should prove to be strong enough to cut a new niche for themselves. Much luck with whatever future endeavors you partake in.

Who knows what the future ever holds? I said that my rackmount ASR-10 was the last Ensoniq keyboard I would buy – turns out I was right and wrong at the same time. I just got another ASR-10. This one is a keyboard version and I still can't understand how someone who has made the products that Ensoniq has could have gotten so stagnant in the market and their creations.

Sorry for the long post.

Keep On Hacking! :)
NTaLec
jwells@erols.com

[PF – NTaLec: Isn't it amazing that the closest keyboard to a 2-year discontinued TS-10/12 is the new Yamaha EX5/EX7? Still hard to beat some of Ensoniq's older gear...]

TH –
Subject: One more angry note...

Ah – I'm not all that angry, just disappointed. The *Hacker* has been a wonderful thing. I've got issues back to almost the beginning. If it weren't for the TH I don't think I would have bought nearly as much Ensoniq gear over the years. Product reviews and helpful hints really do make a difference. Too bad E/E has the modern anatomical inversion, but just as well; they'd offended me enough with the quality problems on my ASR and then making me pay for the repairs (don't get me started!!).

Eric and Jane, thanks; you've made a difference and that's rare. Good luck in the next endeavor. I'm sure you'll do as good a job or even better, whatever it might be.

In typical fashion... I'll try to write that ASR article – seeing as how the ASR is essentially obsolete, the timing is just right! :-)

Take care,
Johnny Klonaris
jawknee@webcom.com
Ensoniq gear: Mirage, VFX, DP/4, ASR-10 and not a damned thing more.

[PF – Johnny: Me too. A keyboard SO intuitive that it didn't EVER get in the way. What higher complement can we pay? But I'm VERY angry. Angry at Ensoniq for not seeing a 3rd and great opportunity, angry at upper management for pissing away the talent, angry at middle management for letting it happen, but most of all, I'm angry at Ensoniq for giving it away on the cheap. Yeah, they screwed up a coupla high-level products, but rather than regroup and remanufacture winners, they ducked for cover and sold the seed corn. So anything they do now won't ever be as refreshing as the older Ensoniq gear we already own...

The pisser of all of this is they REALLY coulda rebounded. I use the Apple scenario as an example. Problem is you can't take a 3-year old set of transwaves, graft it onto a vocoder and expect all to be forgiven. Then to make matters worse, the only way you'll hear Eric M's SUPER demoes of that FIZMO mistake is to pay $30 to bag the plug-in to hear FIZMO at work. At least no loyal Ensoniq owner...

This is patently absurd: I could go hear the real thing if Ensoniq hadn't alienated its dealer base to the degree that not many (if any) will purchase a FIZMO (at special dealer pricing) to prime a pump already run dry. But then to slam the door on its most valuable resource? Somebody kiss these guys quick, 'cause somebody is knocking the bottom outta them without so much as a whimper.]

[TH – Gee, Pat, enough with the diplomacy – tell us how you really feel...]

[PF – Gang: Sorry – didn't mean to sugarcoat it...]

[TH – Well, okay, then.]

TH –

Earlier this year I purchased an **E-Prime** (KT-76). I have been trying to find a 512K RAM card for it (the instructions say it has to be static ram, not flash). The dealer where I bought it sold me another brand of card to try, but it didn't work. I tried some other dealers and they only told me that the cards are not available from anyone they know of. One dealer called Ensoniq and was told that the cards have been discontinued.

Can anyone help me to locate a card for my keyboard?

Wendy Hart
whart@teleport.com

[PF – Try http://www.sunnytecusa.com/pccard/sram.htm. They sell the 512K's for $68 and shipping...]

TH –

I recently got an **EPS Classic**. I've had a few other brands of samplers, and I think this EPS is the best thing since sliced bread! One problem: after I turn it on and boot up with OS disk I try to load instruments and it either says "disk not responding" or "data disk corrupt." But if I turn it off and reload the OS disk then all other disks load fine. I just don't want something else to go bad turning it off and on like that. Do you have any suggestions?

THANKS,
JACK FLASH
JFLASH99@aol.com

[PF – Jack: Make a fresh copy of your OS disk or obtain a new copy of O.S. Version 2.49. Could be the floppy disk is getting corrupt or getting ready to go corrupt.

If the problem persists, (A) clean the disk drive using one the available 3.5" floppy drive cleaners (from Radio Shack, Best Buy, CompUSA, etc). If that provides no joy, take your EPS to an Authorized service center and have the tech check your drive cables. Sounds like it could be any of the above or a combination of the above.]

[TH – If it looks like you need a visit to the tech, just before you go (and only if you feel comfortable messing with your rig), open it up and unplug and replug your drive cables – sometimes just this wiping of the connections can reestablish contact.]

TH –

I'm trying to transfer my **SQ-80** sequencer files to a PC using Cakewalk Express. The software I'm using is the Giebler Enterprises Diskette Managers, EDM and SQ-80 SMF. I talked with him a couple of times. He suggested I talk to someone familiar with Cakewalk. I'm just a working musician trying to get my songs transferred from my old Ensoniq SQ-80's to my new stage rig, a PC clone with an Ensoniq Soundboard and Cakewalk Express. And I'm havin' a hell of a time. Please, anybody out there that can help solve some of the weird stuff my transferred songs are doing, and why some files just won't open up at all.

Thank you,
Michael Hoover
mhoover@nwidt.com

[PF – Mike: www.twelvetone.com is where I'd direct this question. There's a number of Cakewalk user group links from the site as well, as this question is more of a Cakewalk configuration issue...]

Hi,

Have just purchased an **ASR-X** and can't get my sample to play continuously without holding the pad down. Would like to trigger the loop with one pad strike. Have tried to move the sample to a track but I can't get a clean loop...

Help.....thanx
Jeff meisser
jcci@hotmail.com

[PF – JM: The ASR-X has a loop switch, but no true sample editing functions. To edit the loop you'll need to load the sample into an ASR-10 or computer-based sample editor. That's one of the reasons the ASR-X comes it at its particular price point. A lotta people seemed to think it was going to be more like an ASR-10 rack, which it isn't...]

Hello!

As your records will reveal, I am a long-time subscriber to the *Hacker*. I am dismayed to learn of Ensoniq's decision to discontinue active support for the *Hacker*. Seems as if they are shooting themselves in the foot (makes me wonder if the Republicans are in charge here!). I have thoroughly enjoyed your publication and have benefited greatly from the information you have provided. If you decide to begin a publication of any type, please send me subscription info. "I like your style!" I am sending a note of protest to Ensoniq as well. Thanks again for all your help.

Ronnie Holland
Productions & Pastor of the United Pentecostal Church of Cayce.
Holprod@aol.com

Hello,

I am trying to transfer samples to my **ASR** from the Mac via SCSI. I have tried in both "Alchemy" and "Peak" and still no luck. I have tried about every "tip" or "hint" that manuals and read-me files have said to try. Please!.... Someone tell me they have done this before and tell me how to do it properly. If there is a back article on this I will buy that magazine, a subscription, whatever it takes so that I can get going. I have hundreds of samples just sitting there... waiting.

Thanks!
Greg
greg@intersrv.com

[PF – Greg: Pull down the back issue of Sam Mim's EXCELLENT article about this very subject – it details some termination power issues Ensoniq never really clarified in their literature...]

[TH – I believe Pat's referring to Issue #147.]

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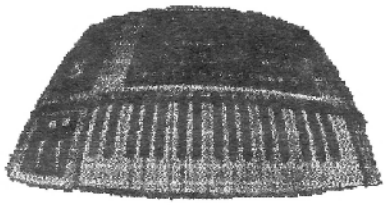

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