MEGATAPE V2.0

INTRODUCTION: Megatape, derived from our famous MEGADISK series of tape to disk transfer utilities, is a program, or rather a large collection of routines, which will backup a wide variety of commercially recorded games and utilities from tape to tape. Megatape handles the most commonly used loading systems — NOVA, NOVA plus stripe, the three major PAVLOAD systems, the two major BURNER systems. Firebird/Mastertronic VISILOADERS, Virgin and Activision FLASHLOADERS (also Activision slowloaders), Epyx 'space bar' loaders, RBS, Fastback, Hypersave 64. A large menu of options for programs with unusual loaders is also provided. Also incorporated in MEGATAPE is RBS PLUS, which converts the majority of your old slowload titles to TURBOLOAD. This latest version of Megatape has two powerful new routines — ULTRANOVA, for the latest type of Novaload used by US Gold etc, and MULTISTAGE novas such as Winter Games, Beach Head 2, and MELB.PAV, for the latest Pavloader as used on Exploding fist and many other Melbourne House programs.

Megatape offers several advantages over the 'backup board' method of program transfer — only one datassette is required, a high quality machine copy is generated which guarantees reliable loading, and a useful increase in loading speed is often obtained, even when transferring fastloaders (of course, a huge time advantage is gained when transferring slowloaders.) Due to the enormous range of different loading systems now in use, it is not possible to backup every program through software alone. However we feel sure that you will find Megatape an effective and economical alternative to other backup methods.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS: Before using Megatape, always switch the computer off then on, after removing any fitted cartridge. Rewind the tape and press SHIFT/RUN to load the program. As you will be loading Megatape many times, we recommend that you make a security backup of the program. To do this, press STOP after the program has loaded. Then put a blank tape into the Datassette and type POKE 44,8:SAVE"MEGATAPE" (return). This slowload backup may be converted to fastload using RBS PLUS.

OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS: All the Megatape routines are accessed from the menu which is displayed when the program has loaded. Before loading Megatape, always test the program to be transferred to ensure that it loads correctly. Also it will be useful, where possible, to determine the number of program sections by couting the blank gaps where the screen border does not flash between sections. You must also have a blank tape handy, which will be used to make the backup. The tape containing the program to be transferred will be referred to as the SOURCE TAPE. You should ensure that the anti-erase tab at the rear of this cassette has been removed. The blank tape onto which the backup is to be made will be referred to as the BACKUP TAPE. The nonmagnetic leader at the start of the tape should be wound off before commencing transfer.

Once these preparations have been made, load Megatape and select the appropriate option (see descriptions later). Enter the filename of your choice, insert the source tape (make sure that it is rewound to the start) and press the '*' key to commence transfer.

During transfer, the tape will stop and one of two prompts will appear at the top of the screen. Read the prompt carefully and ensure that the tape deck is the correct mode before pressing the F1 key to restart the tape. When you insert the SOURCE tape, press the PLAY key on the tape deck. When you insert the BACKUP tape, press the RECORD key. (NOTE: on certain occasions, the prompt will not be visible, but the border will flash violently. When this occurs, remove the tape, insert the other tape, and press the appropriate key on tape (remember, PLAY for the SOURCE tape, RECORD for the BACKUP tape.

The lower numbered options on the menu require this process to be repeated for each program section, which is why, if you are transferring from a compilation tape, it is useful (though by no means essential) to know the total number of program sections, in order to avoid recording sections from the next program on the source tape. The other options will backup the whole program in a single pass.

Once the whole program has been transferred to the backup tape, the program will return to Basic with the READY prompt, or it may lock up. In either case, switch the computer off and on, before rewinding the backup tape to test the transferred program. The Megatape loader is a highly robust, visible screen stripe loader which should give no loading problems provided that you take the usual precautions — use good quality tape, keep your tape heads clean, and well away from sources of electrical interference such as the TV set and computer. Programs transferred using megatape may be recopied using option 1 on the menu (except for multistage Novas transferred with ULTRANOVA — use ULTRANOVA for these).

There now follows a description of the various options available:—

IDENTIFIER (option 11)

This option loads the tape header, and will identify PAV, BURNER, VISILOAD, and MELBOURNE PAV programs. Novas are easily identified by the distinctive grey title screen. Flashloaders will return "unidentified", but these are also distinguishable by their characteristic two colour border (e.g. Ghostbusters). The fact that a program is identified does not imply that it will successfully transfer. Also many programs, such as Ocean/Imagine games, have individual loaders and will not transfer. Don't forget to rewind the tape after using the identifier.

PAV/BURNER/MEGATAPE. (option 1)

This option will transfer virtually all programs which use the Pavload system, and the majority of Burners. It will also recopy programs recorded using Megatape. Examples of Pavs are Fistfull of Fun, Blagger goes to Hollywood, Who Dares wins and most other Alligata titles, Level 9 adventures e.g. Red Moon, Emerald Isle, Adrian Mole etc., Seaside Special, Poster Paster, Cadcam and other Taskset titles, Henrys House, Tir Na Nog. Sherlock, Hobbit (fastload version) and other early Ocean/Melbourne house titles. Many more too numerous to mention. Burners: Shadowfire and other early Beyond titles, Black Thunder, Chiller, 1985, My Chess, Megahits, Select 1. NOTE: some Burners should be transferred with the option GP BURNER e.g. Boulder Dash, Spy vs Spy 2.

MELB.PAV (option 10)

This routine will transfer the latest Pavloader as used by Melbourne House on Exploding fist, Rock and Wrestle, Fighting Warrior etc. When you select this option you will be asked if you are an Australasian user — this is because the Aussie version of this loader has a slight variation which the program will cater for if you answer Y. Otherwise press N. When using this option, if the border goes white and the tape stops while loading, rewind the tape slightly and press play to continue

ULTRANOVA (option 9)

This routine will transfer virtually all NOVALOAD programs, including the latest Nova as used on Monty on the Run, Bombjack, Fight Night, Imhotep, Superman etc. It will also handle MULTISTAGE NOVAS such as Summer Games II, Beach Head II, Winter Games, Hardball, and virtually all Activision and Ariola novas such as Racing Destruction set, Koronis Rift, etc. etc. When transferring multistagers, you should keep the same arrangement as the original tape. For example if the program is recorded over two tape sides, you should also use two sides for your copy. Ensure that you start at the first side when transferring. NOTE: When you are prompted to press PLAY and F1, hold the F1 key before you press play, because occasionally the tape will start prematurely when using this routine.

SUPERNOVA:

This is our original Nova transfer routine. Though superceded by Ultranova, it is included because there may be some programs which this routine will handle which ULTRANOVA will not (though it will not handle multistagers). Use ULTRANOVA first — only use this routine in case of failure.

ACTIVISION: For Activision slowloaders. Examples Pitfall, Pitfall 2, Decathlon, HERO, Beamrider, Pastfinder, Toy Bizzarre, Space Shuttle, Designers Pencil, River Raid. NOTE: if you have a disk drive, switch it off before loading programs transferred with this option. This option will also transfer two section Activision fastloaders e.g. Ghostbusters, but the next option has an extended range.

ACTIV FLASH: For Activision fastloaders, e.g. Ghostbusters, Master of the Lamps, Football, Tennis, Baseball, Hacker, Gt. American Roadrace etc. This type of loader looks similar to Virgin type Flashloaders, but you must use the next option for these. NOTE: newer Activision games use Novaload — transfer with ULTRANOVA.

FLASH 1: For Virgin Flashloaders e.g. Sorcery, Gates of Dawn, Strangeloop, Ghettoblaster, Falcon Patrol 2
FLASH 2: For Flashload variation as used on William Wobbler, View to a Kill. NOTE: the last VTAK section, FINALE, must be transferred with FLASH 1.

FIRECRACKER: For Firebird and Mastertronic type VISILOADERS e.g. Elite, Action Biker, Mr. Freeze, Headache, Estra, Demons of Topaz, Spooks, Booty, Kikstart, Chickin Chase. Also Rupert and the Toy Factory. NOTE: some Mastertronic titles will have corrupt loading screens after transfer, but this does not affect gameplay. NOTE: some Visiloaders issued by other companies will not transfer. Also, newer Firebird titles use a different loader and will not transfer.

EPYX: For Epyx type 'spacebar' loader e.g. Impossible Mission, Dragonriders etc. When using this routine, you must press the spacebar when the tape stops as the program loads from the source tape, to continue transfer. Some individual routines for unusual Epyx loaders are provided e.g. Pitstop 2, Bungeling Bay, Choplifter.

EDGE: For Brian Bloodaxe, Almazz, Firequest.
MICRODEAL: For Microdeal loader e.g. Cuthbert series.
HYPERSAVE 64: For programs recorded with our original fastloading utility.
ANIROG BT: For old Anirog type BLANK screen loaders (not Anirog stripe loaders) e.g. Scramble, Loco.

The remainder of the menu options are for individual programs: Cliffhanger, Shoot the Rapids, Quasimodo, Quill, Everyones a Wally, Arabian Knights, Brian Jacks, Ice Palace, Trollie Wallie, Beach Head, Fighter Pilot, Choplifter, Psi Warrior, Gribblys Day Out, Wallie in Rhymeland, Hercules, Aqanaut, Wheres my Bones, China Miner, Gammeron, Star Trader, Track and Field, Bungeling Bay, Nodes of Yesod, Mama Llama, Eddie Kidd, Kototoni Wilf, Gooch Cricket, Frak 64, Elidon, Herberts Dummy Run, Glider Pilot, Alien, Speedking, Paradroid.

RBS PLUS (option 8)

This option is for conversion of your old slowload, blank screen loaders, which typically take 10 to 15 minutes to load, to Turbo speed. It will handle the majority of such programs. The program will also copy most old RBS recorded programs, as well as those recorded using Fastback, and itself (RBS PLUS). Follow the on screen prompts to use the program. There are few commercial programs currently recorded at slow speed, but you will find this program very useful if you have a collection of vintage games which take a very long time to load. It can also be used to convert "home grown" tape programs to turboload.

Thank you for purchasing MEGATAPE. We hope that you will find it useful. Some titles have been reissued on compilation tapes, using a different loader to the one for which these routines were devised. In such cases, certain named titles will not transfer. We regret that we cannot enter into correspondence regarding individual titles. Please note that this program is intended for personal use only. Dosoft does not condone the illegal distribution of copyright material.