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Apple MessagePad: Use Of Third Party PCMCIA Cards (5/95)

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TOPIC ---

An Apple MessagePad customer would like to use a low-capacity PCMCIA storage
card (256KB) for data transfer. The customer is quite sensitive to the cost of
the equipment for this project and can get 256K PCMCIA RAM cards inexpensively.

The customer needs to know the following:

• Can the Apple MessagePad 100/110 use a 256K card?

• Will any third party storage cards work in the MP 100/110?

• If so, what does the customer need to know about a third party storage card to
ensure that it will work in the MP 100/110?

DISCUSSION --

The Apple MessagePad and Apple MessagePad 110 have very specific requirements
for the types and kinds of PCMCIA cards that can be used. In general there are
two types of RAM cards that currently work with the Apple MessagePad PCMCIA
slot: static-RAM (SRAM) and Flash RAM. The PCMCIA slot uses Type II cards which
are 5 mm thick and support a 16-bit data bus.

SRAM cards generally write data to memory more quickly than Flash RAM but both
types provide similar data-access speeds. SRAM is volatile so it requires the
card be powered at all times or the data disappears. Most SRAM cards ship with
batteries that must be changed intermittently, usually between two and four
years. Additionally SRAM cards generally have smaller capacities ranging between
256K and 1 MB of storage.

Flash RAM cards for the Apple MessagePad must be Series II Flash RAM sold by
Apple. These cards have the Intel-made interface chip, which the Apple
MessagePad looks for, including the FlashFile System that functions as the OS

for the card. Other manufacturers' Flash RAM, which may also include the Intel Flash RAM chips, are incompatible with the Apple MessagePad because the interface chip is not part of these cards.

Third party SRAM cards, while not supported for use in the Apple MessagePad, generally work. The primary limitation in using an SRAM card is the size and type of data that can be stored on the card. Most data types can be placed on static-RAM cards including small applications and soups. The exception is a backup archive. No backup files can be placed on any SRAM card.

Finally, while the Apple MessagePad most likely supports the 256K card you describe, Apple recommends using Flash RAM cards for Apple MessagePad storage because Flash RAM is usually less expensive per MB than SRAM.

Article Change History:
09 May 1995 - Updated Newton reference to Apple MessagePad.

Support Information Services

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