

```
= MID$(X$,1,1) + MID$(X$,I)
70 NEXT
80 X = VAL(X$)
90 RETURN
```

Ronald Randolph
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Editor's Note: This routine requires that X has numbers to the right of the decimal point and that they are not all zeros.

Software Copyrights

To the Editor:

If your readers submitted programs which had been copied from a book or another magazine to you for publication, this would be a violation of copyright.

There are many programs published which contain sections which would be very useful if incorporated into programs which we write. In fact, that is the reason for publishing some programs.

With programs for our own use, I can see no problem with using these subroutines. However, suppose that we eventually decide that our program would be useful or interesting to someone else and would like to submit it for publication. For instance, I wrote a gradebook program which I use a lot. To alphabetize the list of students, I used a sort routine which I saw published. If I should decide to submit this gradebook program for publication, should I reinvent a sort which is as fast as the published one which I've been using? Or should I provide references, like they do in scientific publications? Do I need the author's permission? I happen to know where I saw this routine, but I would guess that many of us use routines without having the slightest idea where we originally saw them published. After all, many of us learned to program by reading books and magazines.

Jack Ryan
El Dorado, Arkansas

Since certain published programs may already be in the public domain—that is, they may not have a copyright—you should first check to see if this is the case. However, if a program you wish to use has an author's copyright notice affixed to it or appears in a copyrighted publication (a copyrighted book or magazine has

a copyright notice somewhere near the front, usually in small type), then, yes, you will be violating copyright if you use that program verbatim in any program you intend to sell, trade or give away. However, you may, under the concept of "fair use," reproduce a copyrighted program for your own personal use.

Software copyright law is new, and different legal people draw the line in different places. We try to stay on top of copyright laws and will publish any new information as it comes in to us.

Traveling Abroad with Your Computer

To the Editor:

A few corrections to Matthew Kiell's article (Sept. 84). It reflects my experience of traveling with a Commodore 64, a 1541 disk drive, a 1702 monitor, an Epson FX80 printer and a Kaypro II computer to Israel through New York, Paris and Rome.

X-Ray Scanners and Customs

In the U.S. it is very easy to get a hand inspection at check points in airports. In Paris, however, all items have to be x-rayed for travelers who do not speak French. If you speak French, it is as easy to get a hand inspection as in the U.S.A. I even got two inspections when I went to the wrong corridor.

We found no problems carrying the computers on board the airplanes. Even a Kaypro computer in a padded envelope with the pocket full of manuals fits very well under the seat. What you do with your feet is another story.

In Paris, the customs are apparently very liberal. You may walk through the green "nothing to declare" door with your computer, as we did, and will not be bothered.

In Israel, if you can show that your computer is a company computer, and you intend to take it out of the country within a reasonable time, you must pay only 2% duty + 15% sales tax.

Electricity

In Israel, the current is 220 V 50 cycles, as it is in most parts of Paris. Unlike the description in Kiell's article, we experienced no flickering of the screen because of the difference in the cycles and saw no "migrating line" on the screen. The picture was as stable as in the U.S. However, the clock will not work correctly and if you have a

watch program, it will be slow. The clock can be reset to work correctly if you write POKE 56334,129:POKE 56590,128 before the program. I have not found any program where the clock made a difference. In a music program, it does not.

Finally, it should be stressed very strongly that only an isolation transformer be used with "American" computers. I plugged my Epson printer by mistake into a Franzus voltage converter and the result was a burned power card. Luckily, I had the Epson technical manual, so a good electronic repairman could replace the burned components.

For those traveling abroad, it is advisable not only to take some plug converters, but also some American line and wall sockets. And if you intend to use your modem, do not leave home without a U.S. wall telephone socket.

Alexander Burcat
Haifa, Israel

In Defense of the Datasette


To the Editor:

Yes, compared to a disk drive, the datasette is slower in saving, loading and data processing. Also, disk allows random access files whereas only sequential files can be produced on tape. But, the datasette is still handy.

First, a cassette is not as fragile to handle as a disk and, thus, is easier to carry or mail. Unlike a disk, the plastic case housing the tape protects the contents better and will not bend.

Second, the datasette is always ready to use because it does not have to be switched on before executing a save. So, a person who starts experimenting around doing a little programming with no intention of saving it can change his mind without risking wiping out the program by turning on the disk drive.

Finally, programs for sale on cassettes are usually less expensive than on disk. (Of course, whether a cassette version will work on disk is a consideration.) In fact, some "obsolete" cassettes can be had at real bargains.

Therefore, having both a datasette and disk drive increases flexibility in acquiring programs, furnishes an always ready saving device, and provides safer program transportation. 

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