

## Check Those Zip Drives for the "Click of Death"

**WHO SHOULD READ THIS BULLETIN:**  
Any person who has an Iomega Zip drive.

Since its introduction in 1995, Iomega Zip drives with removable cartridges have replaced the Bernoulli and Syquest as the most popular media for medium-sized files storage.

Zip drives, which are compatible with PC and Macintosh platforms, offer excellent storage, backup and files transmission capabilities. In lieu of Internet files transfer, the Zip cartridge provides a convenient way to send your digital jobs to Copresco.

Zip drives are available in both internal and external models. The internal unit is an option offered on virtually all computers sold today. We highly recommend this option. The external drive is lightweight and portable and can be easily added to any computer system.

However, some users have expressed concern about the Zip's so-called Click of Death. With this in mind, we are reprinting the following article by Gordon Woolf of Worsley Press, Hastings, Australia.

### **Trouble in Paradise**

Steve Gibson, author of SpinRite, a well-known mass storage data recovery and maintenance utility, explains that it is quite common for a Zip drive to click occasionally. Sometimes, however, there have been more serious problems, and checking the condition of both the Zip drive and the disks helps avoid these problems.

Mr. Gibson offers a free Zip disk checking utility on his website:

<http://www.grc.com/clickdeath.htm>

**This TechTopics and the Gibson website are of great importance to all Zip users. The checking utility, however, is Windows only.**

"Trouble in Paradise," as the utility is called, gives you an on-screen report. The program takes almost an hour to carry out, so it is the ideal test to set going at a meal break.

### **Iomega Drivers Available**

The program also offers the option to download updated drivers from the Iomega FTP site if they

are needed (they doubled the write speed on our drive). Visit Iomega's FTP site at:

<ftp://ftp.iomega.com/pub/english/>

### **The Cause of Clicking**

We quote from Steve's program: "The clicking sound itself is nothing more than the sound of the heads being retracted from the cartridge into the drive then immediately reinserted. This deliberate strategy is employed by the drive when it is having trouble locating, reading, or writing any of the cartridge's data. This removal and reinsertion of the heads recalibrates the head positioning mechanism, 'scrubs' the heads to remove excessive oxide deposits, and eliminates any electrostatic charge build-up on the heads.

It is important for you to understand that the clicking sound itself is NOT the problem. The clicking is just an audible indication of a drive that is having trouble accessing the data on the cartridge."

### **Problem Sources**

He puts the problems down to a variety of sources: bad external power supplies, loose power connectors, excessive magnetic oxide build-up on the drive's heads, magnetic and radio interference from nearby sources, media damage from excessive wear or mistreatment...and an array of internal electrical and mechanical problems from causes ranging from rough handling to defective manufacturing.

Iomega has been quoted as saying that fewer than one-half of one percent of users are affected by the Click of Death. However, consider the following press release from the Dallas, Texas law firm of Dodge, Fazio, Anderson & Jones.

If you think the Click of Death is a minor issue, take a look at this press release announcing a class action suit against Iomega.

### **Class Action Lawsuit**

The law firm of Dodge, Fazio, Anderson & Jones, P.C. has announced that a nationwide class action was commenced on September 10, 1998, in the Superior Court of New Castle County in Delaware on behalf of all owners of the Iomega Zip

Drive. The complaint contains claims for breach of warranty, negligence in manufacturing and design, consumer fraud, and for failure to warn.

### **Renders Drive Useless**

Iomega, which is a Delaware corporation, has been selling the Zip Drive (the "Drive") for over three years. A substantial number of Zip Drives have developed a problem commonly known as the "Click of Death," which renders the Drive useless and damages the disk such that any data on the disk is lost. It appears that the Click of Death can damage an otherwise unaffected Drive by the use of a disk that is already corrupted.

### **Three Causes**

Investigation has shown that the Click of Death has three causes.

First, magnet particles constituted mainly of neodymium and iron corrupt the read-write mechanism of the Drive, as well as any Disk it is attempting to read. Second, the lubricant on the Disk decomposes, forming a solid material which accumulates on the heads of the Drive. This prevents the heads from reading the disk, and subsequently corrupts it. Third, the Drive heads come in contact with the edge of the spinning disk, which can dislodge the Drive heads and/or tear the storage media and render the disk useless.

The named plaintiffs are asking for monetary damages to compensate the Zip Drive owner class for loss of value to the Drives and disks, as well as for punitive damages.

To view a copy of the petition in Acrobat PDF format, go to:

<http://www.texasatty.com/img/iomega.pdf>

### **Equal Time**

To read Iomega's advice of the Click of Death problem, go to:

<http://www.iomega.com/support/documents/30109.html>

To hear what users are saying, you may wish to subscribe to the following usenet groups:

alt.iomega.zip.jaz  
alt.iomega.zip.jazz

These are rather obscure newsgroups, so you may need to contact your Internet Service Provider to ask that they be added to the newsfeed.

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### **Our Thanks**

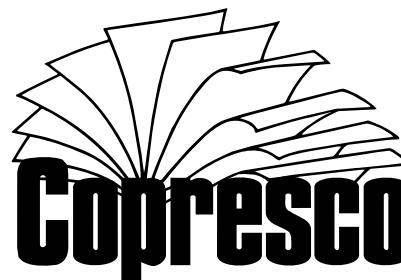
To Gordon Woolf of Worsley Press, Hastings, Victoria, Australia, for permission to reprint this Zip drives article. He can be reached at [format@worsleypress.com](mailto:format@worsleypress.com).

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**Much of the information contained in this bulletin is also applicable to the Iomega Jaz drive.**

### **TechTopics Details**

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