Dear Stringy Floppy Owner:

Thank you for your purchase of the EXATRON Stringy Floppy. To help you continue the joy of carefree program loading and saving, the following comments and suggestions are offered.

Keep the tape head, guides, and capstan very clean using commercial tape head cleaning kits (ispropanal alcohol and "Q-Tip" type cleaning swabs ---- use the type with the long wood handles sold at audio stores and Radio Shack stores.) Keeping the tape head free from tape oxide contaminates will keep tape pull-out and loading and saving errors to a minimum.

If you should experience a tape pull-out loop, place the stick part of your cleaning swab over the half moon cut out portion of the wafer (this is where the capstan engages the tape) and with a slight downward pressure, rotate the stick in a clockwise direction. This will feed the tape back into the wafer. Now insert the wafer back into the ESF and enter an "@LOAD" with a file number that you know is not on the tape. Let it run for awhile and then hit "BREAK". This will realign the tape within the wafer and it should be ok to reuse.

Be sure the tape is lying flat and centered across the pressure pad and pinch roller openings of the wafer. Sometimes a fingernail can catch the tape at those openings and cock it to one side. Using a toothpick or other such "tool", manipulate the tape back to its proper position.

To help prevent the above problem from occuring, slip a plastic backbone over the wafer edge when it is not in use. These "backbones" can be purchased at stationary stores. They are normally used to clamp the left side of plastic report covers. Simply cut them to the length of a wafer and you have a nice protective cover to slip over the exposed tape portion of the wafer.

A nice way to clean the capstan is to take a wafer and wrap a strip of paper around it so that it passes over tha cutout area of the pinch roller (this is where the capstan engages when the wafer is pushed into the ESF slot.) Now push the wafer and its paper strip into the slot and type an @load command. After a few seconds hit "BREAK" or the "RESET" button and pull the wafer out. You'll probably observe some blackish contamination that has rubbed off onto the paper. This thorough method of cleaning the capstan should be done anytime you've had a tape pull-out problem.

It is recommended that you give new tapes several "@news" to work out any loose oxide particles they may have. This can be done in a program loop such as: 10 FOR I=1 TO 10:@NEW:NEXT I. Be sure and clean the head and capstan after performing this operation.

Keep the ESF unit and its connecting cable away from the left side of the video monitor. (High voltage pulse radiation from that area will sometimes confuse Stringy and error messages might start to appear.)

If you are using a memory expansion unit with an internal clock, the clock must be turned off before you can certify (@new) a wafer.

As when using cassette or disc for program storage, it is extremely important to immdiately make a backup copy of any program or data files on to a different wafer.

Your attention is directed to paragraph 3.5.2(c) "Autostart Override" of the Users Manual. This paragraph provides important information on the method to be used when making copies of machine language programs with autostart such as "DATA I/O" and "ESF-80 MONITOR" as furnished on your programmed Starter Kit wafer.

If you load either of these programs and get their sign on message, they have autostarted. If you now attempt to save them using the parameters as given on page B-1, you will get on invalid "save". Using the Autostart Override function of your 4.1 version of the Stringy Floppy will allow the saving of machine language programs as described on page 3-3 of the Users Manual without the necessity of ever referring to page B-1.

It is hoped these few hints will help you through some of the new experiences you might encounter while using Stringy for the first time.

Exatron would appreciate hearing from you on any feedback you would care to give concerning the operation of your ESF.

The most important suggestion we have saved for last: Please join and support your local ESF WORKSHOP.   =*=*= HAPPY COMPUTING =*=*=

Dear Stringy Floppy Owner:

Thank you for buying this program. Every effort was made to insure that the programmed wafer that you received is an accurate valid copy of the author's original version as kept in our MASTER program file.

Occasionally the program code, as recorded on the wafer tape, can be altered or erased while in transit to you. This can be caused by a number of things, some of which are; the wafer coming in contact with extreme temperature conditions, magnetic fields, and electrostatic fields. Any of these conditions have the possibility of destroying data recorded on magnetic tape or disk.

If you find that this program will not load, it could be due to any of the above conditions and you should return it for replacement. Before you condem the wafer though, there are two things for you to check. These are:

1.   The READ/WRITE head of your ESF may have some contamination on the surface. If this is so, it can cause bad loads on some wafers and yet still allow other wafers to load with no trouble. Generally whenever you see a PARITY ERROR message displayed on the screen during an @LOAD operation, it's really telling you to CLEAN THE READ/WRITE HEAD. This may be a good time to clean the capstan also if you haven't done so within the past 30 days. Cleaning methods are covered in the literature you received with the ESF Starter Kit.

In most cases, cleaning the HEAD will solve any READ problems. If cleaning the HEAD did not solve the problem, then proceed to the next check.

2.   There may be a motor speed problem with your ESF. If the tape drive motor in your ESF varies widely or is constantly running faster or slower than its designed speed, then you could be having a lot of headaches trying to get good loads. If at all possible, try loading the program on another ESF. If your troublesome programs seem to load ok on another machine, then you may have this motor speed problem. If you constantly seem to be having load problems with programs recorded on other machines, then a motor speed check is in order.

This can be checked quite easily using a special calibrated wafer tape available from Exatron. It sells for $3.95 plus shipping and comes with instructions on how to use it and explains how to make any necessary speed adjustments to your ESF. It is recommended that this ESF CALIBRATION TAPE be a part of your library and it be used periodically to check on the operation of your unit.

This calibration wafer can only be used for the Model I ESF, at this point in time.

If none of the above suggestions help, then you may have other problems with the ESF and you should call the service department at Exatron for advice. This will surely be a rare thing for you to have to do because of the proven extreme reliability of the ESF design. But things can go wrong and you are invited to use our Hotline for help and advice anytime you feel the need. Remember though, to first consult your local ESF Workshop friends for help and if that approach is not successful, then our Hotline is your backup.

There is no need to call Exatron for authorization to return any suspected wafer, and we prefer that you do not. When you have determined from the above tests that you have received a defective wafer, then return it immediately along with a note explaining why you are sending it back and a new programmed wafer will be promptly mailed.

Thank you for your continued support of Exatron products. We value you as a satisfied customer.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Exatron Stringy Floppy is a new and exciting product. Exatron has been working on development for over two years. The ESF has undergone extensive field tests since its introduction in March 1978. I believe that your ESF will give you many years of faithful service.

The name EXATRON and our logo, an E inside of an E, is a graphics symbol of our motto "Excellence in Electronics". If you are not completely satisfied with ESF please return it within 30 days. Your money will be cheerfully refunded. If you decide to keep your ESF, help us to tell other prospective owners about the ESF. Satisfied and enthusiastic owners are our only salesmen.

I believe that the Exatron Stringy Floppy will obsolete the use of audio cassettes for digital data storage within a few years. This will be a very big job and will take a lot of doing. If you have any ideas to help make this happen, please use the HOT LINE to contact me.

Exatron wants to be *everyones* mass storage company!

Sincerely yours,

Robert L. Howell
Chairman

P.S.   Every effort is being made to ensure that every ESF wafer will work properly when you receive it; however, it is impossible to prevent occasional defective wafers. Please check each wafer as soon as possible after you receive it and return any defective wafers within 5 days. Replacements will be made at no charge.