

SuperDrive

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(Redirected from Superdrive)

SuperDrive is a term that has been used by Apple Computer for two different storage drives: from the late 1980s to the mid 1990s to refer to a high-density floppy disk drive; and from the late 1990s onwards to refer to a combined CD/DVD reader/writer.

Contents

- 1 Floppy disk drive
- 2 CD and DVD drive
 - 2.1 Current SuperDrives
 - 2.1.1 The Mac Pro SuperDrive
 - 2.1.2 The MacBook Pro (17 inch), Mac mini, and iMac SuperDrive
 - 2.1.3 The MacBook (Core 2 Duo) and MacBook Pro (15 inch Core 2 Duo) SuperDrive
- 3 See also
- 4 External links

Floppy disk drive

The term was first used by Apple Computer in 1988 to refer to their 1.44 MB 3.5 inch floppy drive. This replaced the older 800 KB floppy drive that had been standard in the Macintosh up to then, but remained compatible in that it could continue to read and write both 800K (double-sided) and 400K (single-sided) floppy disks, as well as the then-new high-density floppies. This drive was also capable of reading and writing MS-DOS formatted disks with appropriate software, unlike the 400K and 800K drives. This was made possible as the SuperDrive now utilized the same MFM (Modified Frequency Modulation) encoding scheme used by the IBM PC, yet still retained backward compatibility with Apple's GCR (Group Code Recording) encoding format, so it could continue to read Macintosh MFS, HFS and Apple II ProDOS formats on 400/800K disks.

The SuperDrive was known primarily as an internalized floppy drive that was built in part of the Macintosh computer; however, an external version of the drive was manufactured that came in a stylized plastic case. While the external drive worked on both Apple's product lines, it was mainly intended for use on the Apple II series (in 1991, Apple introduced a slot-based interface called the Apple II 3.5 Disk Controller Card for Apple IIe and IIGS computers so they too could use 1.4 MB storage and read/write MS-DOS).

The first Macintosh model to include a SuperDrive floppy drive was the Macintosh IIx. Every Macintosh and PowerBook (with the exception of the Powerbook 100, PowerBook Duo series, and PowerBook 2400c, which had an external floppy drive as an option), introduced from 1988-1997 had a SuperDrive floppy drive (advertised as a 1.44 MB floppy drive) built in. The last model to include this feature was the Power Macintosh G3 series, which was manufactured until January 1999. The Powerbook G3 1998 model, (a.k.a. Wallstreet) had an optional floppy drive module. The Powerbook 190 series, Powerbook 5300 Series, Powerbook 3400c, and original Powerbook G3 shared the same floppy drive module, but the module was a standard feature. The Powerbook 1400 series also had a Floppy Drive module, but it used a different module.

CD and DVD drive

Once use of floppy disks started declining, Apple reused the term to refer to the (originally Pioneer-built) DVD writers built into its Macintosh models, which can read and write both DVDs and CDs. As of December 2006, SuperDrives are combination DVD \pm R/ \pm RW and CD-R/RW writer drives offering speeds of 4x-36x and supporting the DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD+R DL, DVD \pm RW, DVD-9, CD-R, and CD-RW formats along with all normal read-only media.

The term is not widely used outside the Macintosh community, though within the Mac community the term has become somewhat genericized to refer to any DVD burner, not just the factory-standard Pioneer models.

Current SuperDrives

The Mac Pro SuperDrive

- Writes DVD \pm R discs at up to 16x,
- Writes DVD+R DL discs at up to 6x,
- Reads DVDs at up to 16x,
- Writes CD-R and CD-RW discs at up to 24x,
- Reads CDs at up to 32x. [1] (<http://www.apple.com/macpro/specs.html>)

The MacBook Pro (17 inch), Mac mini, and iMac SuperDrive

- Writes DVD-R and DVD+R discs at up to 8x,
- Writes DVD-RW and DVD+RW discs at up to 4x,
- Writes DVD+R DL at up to 2.4x,
- Writes CD-R at up to 24x,
- Writes CD-RW at up to 16x,
- Reads single layer DVD-ROM discs at up to 8x,
- Reads double layer DVD+R at up to 4x,
- Reads other DVDs at up to 6x.

The MacBook (Core 2 Duo) and MacBook Pro (15 inch Core 2 Duo) SuperDrive

- Writes DVD+R DL (double layer) discs at up to 2.4x speed
- Writes DVD-R and DVD+R discs at up to 8x speed
- Writes DVD-RW and DVD+RW discs at up to 4x speed
- Reads DVDs at up to 8x speed
- Writes CD-R discs at up to 24x speed
- Writes CD-RW discs at up to 10x speed
- Reads CDs at up to 24x speed

See also

- SuperDisk - a format designed by Imation as a successor to the floppy disk.
- SuperMulti - a type of DVD drive that can read and write all DVD formats.
- Combo drive - an optical drive that can read and write CDs and reads DVDs

External links

- Apple Ships Industry's First SuperDrive (<http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2001/feb/19super.html>)

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Categories: Wikipedia laundry list cleanup | Computer storage devices | Apple Inc. hardware

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