

# Inside Commodore DOS

by Richard Immers  
and Gerald G. Neufeld

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## Review by Michael Quigley

It is unfortunate that, in order to truly understand how the 1541 disk drive works, you have to shell out more bucks on top of the cost of the drive itself. In the case of this book, however, the money is well worth it.

Although there are other treatises on the 1541, the great delight about *Inside Commodore DOS* is that it is well bound and printed, and has been created by people who are not only literate (a real rarity in the field of computer literature) but have a sense of humour, to boot.

About two hundred of the book's pages are devoted to explaining the various commands, how data is organized on a disk, direct-access programming, how to create errors, and how to recover from various nightmares (like physically damaging the disk).

The remaining pages are taken up by an analysis of the 1541's ROM. This is a disassembly, but not in the normal sense one may be accustomed to with a machine language monitor. It lists the starting addresses of routines (*all* of them, from \$C100 to \$FFFE) and then provides a description of what happens at each location. Anyone who wants to get the usual kind of disassembly will have to use one of the programs that reads any area of the drive's RAM or ROM, and then stores it in a program file. This program file can then be loaded into the computer and examined. (Another source of this code is in *The Anatomy of the 1541 Disk Drive*, published by Abacus Software.)

Not all portions of the book are gospel truth. There are some passages on the alleged incompatibility between the 1541 and 4040 drives that are not accurate, according to one knowledgeable member of our users' group, an expert on the 4040.

Still, these faults aside, *Inside Commodore DOS* is an excellent addition to your no doubt ever-increasing library of computer books. □