

VIDEOTEX
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Decoder Software II

designed exclusively for the Commodore 64

Operating Instructions



MANITOBA
TELEPHONE
SYSTEM

VIDEOTEX Decoder II For the Commodore 64

I Introduction

Videotex is a generic term used to describe a family of information and transaction services for home and business wherein a user can select information consisting of both textual and graphical data for presentation on his/her terminal. The North American standard for Videotex is known as the North American Presentation Level Protocol Syntax (NAPLPS).

This document describes the Manitoba Telephone System (M.T.S.) Videotex Decoder II software package that converts the Commodore 64 into a terminal capable of decoding a large subset of NAPLPS. All major functions necessary to display text and graphics have been implemented. It should be noted that certain hardware limitations inherent in the Commodore 64 prohibit some information from being displayed accurately.

II Hardware Requirements

The minimum hardware requirements for videotex access are:

- 1) Commodore 64 computer.
- 2) Commodore 1541 disk drive
- 3) Video display (Commodore color monitor or color TV).
- 4) Modem (300 or 1200 baud).
- 5) RS232C interface adaptor (not required for plug-compatible modems).
- 6) Printers (optional) – Commodore 1525E, MPS801, MPS803

A modem is a device which is installed between your computer and the telephone line allowing you to communicate with the database computer.

The M.T.S. Videotex Decoder II package supports 300 or 1200 baud modems. If you obtain a modem that is not plug-compatible with the Commodore 64, then you also need an RS232C interface. This unit plugs into the Commodore's user port and connects to most modems.

III Getting Ready

Before you can access any database you need certain information. Contact the database operator and obtain:

1) Log-On Procedures

- Typically an Identification Number (ID) and Password are required to gain entry to the database. They identify you as a valid user of the service.

2) Communications Support

- Obtain the baud rate, parity and session level so that you can properly set up your modem and the program. See Section IV.

3) Telephone Number

- Obtain the telephone number of the database computer.
- Identify the baud rate (300 or 1200) you are using since this will determine the telephone number to be dialed.

4) Database Organization

- Obtain general information on database operation and organization.
- Determine how to access information, what special commands are available, how to log-off, etc.

IV Running the Program

You now have enough information to run the Videotex Decoder II software package and access a database. The following instructions will get you there:

- 1) Ensure that all your equipment is properly connected and powered on.
Consult your user manuals where necessary.
- 2) Insert the Videotex Decoder II diskette into the disk drive.
- 3) Type LOAD "VTX", 8, 1 and press RETURN. After about 2 minutes, the screen will clear and display "naplps ready".
- 4) Set the communications parameters as obtained in Section III. Enter the Communications Setup mode by holding the Commodore key (C=) down and typing C. The setup page will be displayed showing all options with the default values surrounded by a rectangle.

A) Baud Rate:

The baud rate defines the speed at which data is transferred between computers. Two rates are shown, with the default value set at 1200 baud. The 300 baud rate can be obtained by pressing A which causes the rectangle to move around option A.

B) Parity

Parity is used to ensure correct transmission of data between computers. One of five options (Odd, Even, None, Mark, Space) can be set by pressing its associated letter (C, D, E, F or G respectively).

C) Session

Most databases use one of two communication session levels. A session level is a series of communications commands that facilitates communication between terminals and the database. Choose either AT&T+ or INFOMART by pressing H or I respectively.

D) Mode

The Commodore 64 can be configured as a NAPLPS decoder or as an ASCII terminal. In the ASCII mode, all data is interpreted and displayed as text. Choose the desired mode by pressing J for NAPLPS or K for ASCII.

When all parameters are properly set, hold the Commodore key (C=) down and type C to return to the Terminal mode. The screen will clear and display "ascii ready" or "naplps ready" depending upon the mode chosen.

- 5) Dial the database and log-on as per instructions received from the database operator.

V Special Features

The M.T.S. Videotex Decoder II Software contains a number of special features. Note: These features (with the exception of Local Echo) operate only in the NAPLPS mode.

1) Local Echo

The local echo feature should be used when the database does not display the characters typed on your screen. To activate, hold the Commodore key (C=) down and type E. Repeat this procedure to deactivate.

Note: In NAPLPS mode the characters are displayed on the bottom of the screen and transmitted when the RETURN key is pressed. In ASCII mode the characters typed are displayed on the screen and immediately transmitted.

2) Hard Copy Printout

This feature allows the user to obtain hard copy printouts of displayed pages in either text only or text / graphics formats.

A) Text Printout

To obtain a text only printout of the page being displayed, hold the Commodore key (C=) down and type T. When the printout is completed, "naplps ready" will be displayed on your screen. Pressing the space bar will abort the printing.

B) Graphics / Text Printout In Grey Scales

To obtain a graphics / text printout of the page being displayed, hold the Commodore key (C=) down and type G. When the printout is completed, "naplps ready" will be displayed on your screen. Pressing the space bar will abort the printing.

3) Kill Graphics

This feature allows the user to strip out all graphics in a page and display only text in white. It is especially useful in cases where graphics would mask important text when printing. To activate hold the (C=) key down and type K. Subsequent pages requested will not display graphics. Repeat the procedure to deactivate.

4) Save pages on Diskette

This feature allows the user to save pages on diskette for later viewing.

To save a page:

- A) Insert a formatted diskette into the disk drive. (Ensure that the write protect tab has been removed.).
- B) Hold the SHIFT key down and press the CLR / HOME key to clear screen and reset input buffers.
- C) Request page to be saved by repeating current page or entering page name.
- D) When page is finished displaying on screen hold the Commodore key (C=) down and press S.

- E) Type page name when prompted and press the RETURN key.
 - F) Page will be saved and "naplps ready" will be displayed when finished.
- To replace a page while keeping the same name, prefix the page name with @:

5) Load Pages From Diskette

This feature allows the user to recall saved pages for viewing.

To load a saved page:

- A) Insert the diskette containing the saved page into the disk drive.
- B) Hold the Commodore key (C=) down and type L.
- C) Type page name when prompted and press the RETURN key.
- D) Page will be loaded and displayed.

To obtain a directory of your saved pages, use \$ as the page name.

6) Delete Pages from Diskette

This feature allows the user to delete saved pages that are no longer required.

To delete a saved page:

- A) Insert the diskette containing the saved page into the disk drive (Ensure that the write protect tab has been removed).
- B) Hold the Commodore key (C=) down and type D.
- C) Type page name when prompted and press the RETURN key.
- D) Page will be deleted from the diskette and "naplps ready" will be displayed.

7) Unprotected Fields

Unprotected fields are rectangular areas on the display into which users may enter or edit data for services such as messaging, order entry, etc.

You will normally be advised by the database when this feature can be used. The following local edit functions are available:

A) Cursor Control

The cursor control keys (CRSR) located on the bottom right side of the keyboard enable the user to move the cursor within the field without affecting the data.

B) Delete

Pressing the INST/DEL key will delete the last character entered.

C) Next Field

Pressing the ← key located in the upper left side of the keyboard will cause the cursor to advance to the top of the next unprotected field.

D) Next Line

Holding the SHIFT key down and pressing the RETURN key moves the cursor to the beginning of the next line within the field.

E) Send Data

Pressing the RETURN key causes all unprotected fields to be sent to the database.

8) Programmable Macro Keys

These keys are the special function keys F1–F8 located on the right hand side of the keyboard. These keys can only be programmed by the database to perform certain special functions. You will normally be advised when these keys can be used. The keys will make an audible sound if they are pressed but have not been programmed by the database.

9) Other Special Functions

Return

The RETURN key is programmed differently depending on the mode used.

In ASCII mode pressing the RETURN key causes a carriage return (CR) code to be sent to the database. This is the normal data terminator when accessing any textual database.

In NAPLPS mode pressing the RETURN key causes a service delimiter character (SDC) to be sent to the database. This character is normally required to terminate data being sent to most NAPLPS database (similar to the SEND key on some videotex terminals). However, if a carriage return (CR) is needed to communicate with a data network or intelligent modems while in NAPLPS mode, hold SHIFT down and press the RETURN key.

XOFF

Holding the Commodore (C=) key and typing F causes the C64 to send a XOFF to the database. This is used to temporarily stop the database from transmitting data.

XON

Holding the Commodore (C=) key down and typing N causes the C64 to send a XON to the database. This causes the database to resume transmitting data.

INST/DEL

Pressing the INST/DEL key will delete the last character entered.

CLR/HOME

Pressing the CLR / HOME key will clear the screen and place the cursor at the top left corner of the screen.

VI ERROR MESSAGES

If an error occurs, an error number will be displayed at the top of the screen. The following is a list of error messages:

Disk Operations

Error Number	Error Description
2	Device not present
4	File not found

Other disk errors are indicated only by a flashing red light on the disk drive. Always verify any disk operation.

Printer Operatons

Error Number	Error Description
2	Device not present

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Return of the registration card will also permit us to contact you with information on any software upgrades.

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