

Penny & Giles – Product Support

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Introduction

The Optical Quick Access Recorder (OQAR) and PC Card Quick Access Recorder (PQAR) include the facility for the customer to store information, in the form of electronic data files, in a protected area of the media called the USERAREA.

Function Description.

The USERAREA is an electronic folder recorded onto the media from the root directory – with the name USERAREA, and it is created (typically) using Windows Explorer or by the replay software. The OQAR/PQAR does not require to see this folder name in either upper or lower case, however the general convention is to record this folder name in upper case letters only.

This folder and its contents will be unaffected by the normal OQAR/PQAR recording activity.

Note : In the event that the OQAR/PQAR does not recognize the media format, it will perform a 'high-level' format on the media destroying any existing data stored on the media and in the USERAREA, therefore it is important to ensure that the USERAREA is only created on media that has previously been inside an OQAR/PQAR.

USERAREA Contents.

The operator may store any electronic files in the USERAREA folder such as the serial number file described below, or any other file required by the FOQA department.

CAUTION : The flight data recording capacity of the OQAR/PQAR will be reduced by the size of the electronic files stored in the USERAREA. In one hour (At data rate 256wps) the OQAR/PQAR will use approximately 1.4MB of storage media space.

Disk/Card Serial Number.

The serial number of the MO disk or PCMCIA card will be used to track the media within a customers FOQA system. This is so that the performance history of the media, the OQAR/PQAR, aircraft and DMU can be tracked, aiding the isolation of system problems.

The media serial number is assigned by the customer FOQA department and is usually indelibly recorded on the body of the MO disk or PCMCIA card. Serial numbers applied to labels are not recommended since these can be removed or damaged.

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Recording or Creating the Serial Number.

The established method of recording an 'electronic' serial number on the media is to store a text file in the USERAREA folder. This file should conform to the MS-DOS file naming convention of 8 characters for the file name and 3 characters for the extension. The 8 character file name would normally be a numerical file name with the customer's media serial number padded to 8 characters in length with leading zeros. The extension should be standardized as the same 3 characters – such as SER. In addition the file should contain the 8-character file name as the serial number.

For Example : In Windows Notepad, create a new text file. Type the 8character serial number (such as '00001234') then save and close the file in the USERAREA folder of the optical with the filename and extension '00001234.SER'.

Using the Serial Number.

The replay software should use the following rules to establish the 'serial number' of the media it is processing;

1. Check the USERAREA folder for a '.SER' file, then use either the 8 character file name as the serial number or open the file and extract the 8 characters it contains and use this as the serial number.
2. In the absence of the serial number in the USERAREA, prompt the customers to enter a serial number (conforming to the convention defined previously) then record this as the serial number in the USERAREA on the disk.
3. Use an auto-generated serial number, and store this in the USERAREA. Prompt the user to confirm they accept the auto generated serial number.

Note : Care should be taken to preserve the serial number of the media processed by the FOQA department. For example, if the optical disk is formatted, then the operator should ensure that the serial number of the disk (if it was known) is put back onto the disk after the formatting process.

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