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Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

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From: Michael J. Mahon

Comment:

I have a large collection of software for the Apple II series of computers. The vast majority of this software is on 5.25" floppy disks, using the proprietary Apple II GCR disk encoding.

Most of this software is over 20 years old, and was published by firms that are no longer in business. In most cases the original authors are unreachable, and in some cases, deceased.

They generally worked alone, and their surviving family members seldom have any knowledge of their works of two decades ago.

Although the software has no commercial value today (though "originals" might be collectible), it is of considerable historical interest, since it chronicles the development of personal computer technologies and markets prior to the modern era, dominated by PCs and Macs.

Some of my disks have already become unreadable, and I expect that within the next few years, the many more will follow. The only practical way that I can preserve these works for future study is to copy them to newer media, such as CD-R disks or DVD-Rs.

To do this, though, violates copyright, and, in some cases, requires the circumvention of various copy-protection schemes used by the original publishers.

I currently have no legal avenue to preserve this software from the ravages of time and changing technology.

I am not trying to publish these works or use them for any commercial purpose, but only trying to preserve them for my own--and possible others'--future study.