

A RADICAL SOFTWARE STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT



PANASONIC'S
Deluxe 1/2" Editor (Model NV3150)

EDITING DECKS

Completely reliable editing in half-inch video is not yet a reality, although the Sony AV3650 is highly useful relative to its size and cost (Retail: \$995.00; standard discount price: \$845.00). You can edit with complete success on a one-inch machine but that requires between \$4,000 and \$5,000 just for the deck; one-inch tape is twice as expensive as half-inch; and there's no compatibility between one-inch machines so your master tapes can only be played back at your place.

Thus, two companies have announced improved half-inch editing decks (compatible with all type-one standard machines), one of which promises to be the equivalent of a super one-inch editor except that it will use half-inch tape.

Both Panasonic and Ampex claim they will be selling top quality half-inch editors in the spring. Panasonic calls theirs a model NV3130. Ampex's is a model VR-420. Panasonic not only claims their deck will do perfect insert and assembly edits, but it will also be a half-inch color deck, and will have a drop-out compensator. The Ampex machine will be black-and-white and will utilize two motors, for added reliability, instead of the single motor system on current half-inch decks.

Ampex says their deck will sell for \$1,200 and will be available in April. But with Ampex it's hard to know. If they do market this machine it will be the first half-inch equipment they've ever sold. This includes their Instavideo unit which they've been promising for two years now and have put off three or four times. Moreover, the company lost \$40 million last year. Thus, while their one and two-inch equipment might be the best, their record of mismanagement makes one skeptical of their ability to deliver a reliable deck in the near future. Especially because the first months production of any new video equipment guarantees that the first purchasers have to do a company's field testing. We got burned a bit by buying the very first of the Sony AV line which wasn't as reliable as subsequent models.

As for Panasonic, they say that their half-inch deck will list for \$1,500 and be out sometime in the spring. But more important than the NV3130 model is one they call the NV3150. It will list for \$3,000 and have all the features of a good one-inch machine, including solenoid switches, two-track audio, and the drop-out compensator. Panasonic isn't quite sure, however, exactly when the deck will be available and this fall is probably the earliest, if then.

PORTA-PAKS: Sony, Sanyo, Akai, Nivico, and Ampex

When our correspondent visited the Sony factory in Tokyo last summer he was told that they are working on a lighter, more compact portable VTR. But the chances of there being a Rover III (we're currently at Rover II) in the next year or so are very slim.

Meanwhile, Sanyo has put out a brochure describing a half-inch cassette Porta-Pak which, with camera, weighs only 13 pounds (compared to 21 for the Sony). It is not compatible with anything but itself, runs at a slower speed than type one standard, has an optical instead of an electronic viewfinder in the camera, and can only record up to 12 minutes before you have to put a fresh tape in. Sanyo (which also makes Craig equipment) hasn't announced prices or delivery date yet.



SANYO
1/4" Videocassette Porta-Pak

Since we last wrote about portable video equipment (issue 3) Akai has charged up their sales network and their quarter-inch tape portable is now easy to get. From what we hear it is a good machine. But again there is the problem of its incompatibility with all but its own standard, and the lack of editing back-up. Some people are into taping maskers with the Akai and editing on Sony, which seems to work.

There is also a new half-inch portable being marketed. Its manufactured by Japan Victor and sold under the brand name of Nivico. It is type one standard and seems to be a duplication, feature for feature, of the Sony Rover II. Whether it's better or worse we don't know.

And, finally, there is Ampex Instavideo. It was the fall of 1970 when Ampex announced its Porta-Pak and showed a demo model at trade conventions. Delivery date: spring of 1971. In spring of 1971 Ampex announced they wouldn't be available until the fall. Now, of course, it's almost spring of 1972, and still no Instavideo. Postponed until 1973. What with Ampex's \$40 million loss last year we may never see it, along with EVR, and RCA's legendary laser-plastic tape videocassette player; all casualties of corporate egotism where prototypes and public relations were supposed to convince stockholders that their companies were right in there with the newest consumer technology when, in fact, they were unable to deliver.