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PowerBook: Tech Procedures Contains Wrong SCSI Transfer Rate

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TOPIC -----

What is the SCSI transfer rate of the Macintosh PowerBook? The Technical Procedures lists the Macintosh PowerBook SCSI transfer rate as 7.5MB/sec.

DISCUSSION -----

As of February 1992, the Service Technical Procedures incorrectly lists the Macintosh PowerBook SCSI transfer rate as 7.5MB/sec.

The PowerBook series uses an AM85C80 combo chip that combines SCSI control and serial control. The AM85C80 is specified at a 1.5MB/sec (asynchronous) data transfer rate. This means that the chip is theoretically capable of this rate; however, actual rates will vary. Some variables include the driver used, hard drive performance, and software used.

We used two different utilities to measure the data transfer rate on a PowerBook 170, Macintosh IIci, Macintosh IIfx, and Macintosh Quadra 900. We tried each of the desktop Macintosh models with more than one hard drive. Using our UNOFFICIAL and INFORMAL testing, these are the approximate average transfer rates:

Model	SCSI Transfer Rate
Macintosh PowerBook 170	.70MB/sec
Macintosh IIci	.75MB/sec
Macintosh IIfx	.9MB/sec
Macintosh Quadra 900	Varied from .8 to 2MB/sec

Some criteria to consider when comparing speeds:

- SCSI chip transfer rate limit
- SCSI driver used
- Hard drive performance
- Software applications
 - For example: The actual transfer time under the 7.0.1 Finder appears to be about 3 to 4 times slower than the test results.

Conclusion

The theoretical sustained data transfer rate for the PowerBook series can be stated as 1.5MB/sec. The actual transfer rate will be less 1.5MB/sec, depending on many variables including those listed above.

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