

\* THE ELECTRONIC SIGN \*  
-Video Advertising System-

Operating Instructions

"The Electronic Sign" Video Advertising system is the most significant development in on-location advertising since the felt-tip pen and poster board. The colorful, attention getting display lends itself to countless applications. "The Electronic Sign", with all it's exciting potential, is designed to be extremely easy to use.

System Set-Up

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Generally speaking, the larger the color TV used for the display the better. A 19" set gives excellent results and is usually a very good price/size tradeoff. Place the set where it can most easily be seen, which is often at eye-level. Connect the set to your VIC-20 computer as instructed by the computer's manual. You may even desire to run multiple TVs. With the power off, insert "The Electronic Sign" cartridge into the computer's expansion port. The cartridge may stay inserted at all times, even when the computer is off.

Overview

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"The Electronic Sign" allows the user to enter up to 20 frames of announcements. Using one of the 10 pre-defined layouts, text is entered for each frame in the Input Mode. In the Display Mode, each frame that has been filled will be projected on the screen, one at a time in order. Centering and color combinations are handled automatically. Editing, additional input, and other functions are accessible by going to the Menu Mode. Even when the computer is turned off, The Electronic Sign keeps all your advertising text intact.

Power-On

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With "The Electronic Sign" cartridge installed in the expansion port, turn on the computer. At this point, if text has been previously entered and the internal battery-backup system is charged, "The Electronic Sign" will go directly into Display Mode and begin displaying your messages. This automatic Display Mode on power-up is in case you desire to run the system on a timer. If you are in the Display Mode, hold down the key labeled "RUN/STOP" on the left side of the keyboard. Then you will see a screen titled "THE ELECTRONIC SIGN". If you're going thru this for the first time, for now just hit C to clear the system and start from scratch. Now you will be asked to verify that command, so hit "Y" for yes. The computer will clear itself and put you in the Input Mode for Frame 1, just as if the battery back-up had failed.



## Input Mode

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Take out the worksheet included with this manual that shows the 10 available layouts. The best approach is to make multiple photo-copies of this worksheet, then cut up each copy into 10 individual layout slips. That way, you can compose your text for each frame on these little slips, then enter them one at a time as you flip through. This makes composing and editing much easier, and you can keep the slips for frames you particularly like for future use.

Let's go through Input Mode operation by entering a typical frame. This week we have Aspirin on sale. After sizing up what we want to say and looking over our worksheets, we choose Layout #9. When composing messages and choosing layouts, keep the messages concise, choose layouts that give larger characters to the most important words and try to use the largest letters possible given the message. Any one of the 10 layouts (0-9) may be chosen for each frame.

Back to our Aspirin. The first thing we should do is fill in one of our copies of the Layout #9 worksheet as illustrated. Never leave spaces at the beginning of the line, since "The Electronic Sign" automatically centers every line when it is displayed. Keep in mind that the lines are different lengths because the 7 character lines are large, the 11 character lines are medium, and the 22 character lines are small sized characters, so that is how many will actually fit across the screen. The allowed characters are all capital letters, all numerals, plus ! \$ % & ' ( ) - @ : = , . / ?

At the top of the screen is the frame number we are working on (1 to 20). Under that is the request to "SELECT LAYOUT FOR THIS FRAME (0 THRU 9):" followed by a flashing block called a cursor. If text has previously been entered in this frame, there may be a number already under the cursor. If it happened to be the number we desire (9) we could leave it the same by hitting RETURN. Otherwise, select Layout 9 by hitting the "9" key.

Layout 9 is now selected, and the instruction "ENTER TEXT FOR EACH LINE" appears on the screen. Below that is the prompt "-LINE 1 (11 CHAR)", reminding you that the top line in Layout 9 is 11 characters long. Under that is a flashing cursor. Now, starting from the left, type in the first line "THIS WEEK!". If you make a mistake, you can move the cursor with the left-right CRSR key located at the bottom right of the keyboard. To go right, hit this key. To go left, hold down shift and hit this key. Moving the cursor over the characters does not alter them. They are only changed when you type over them. (This cursor movement is the same as used in Commodore Basic). When you have the line looking just the way you want it, hit RETURN. The cursor may be anywhere on the line when you hit RETURN. Now do the other 4 lines the same way. Remember to leave no spaces to the left of the text.



[illegible]

After you finish the 5th line, a small menu of 3 choices appears at the bottom of the screen with a flashing "?" giving the following choices:

R - REDO THIS FRAME

Look over what you have entered. If you see a mistake hit "R". This will take you to the top and let you start over. If you do, remember that all you have to do is hit RETURN for lines you want to leave the same, there is no need to retype anything but the correction.

N - GO TO NEXT FRAME

This will leave you in Input Mode and go to the next frame for you to input another message.

D - GO TO DISPLAY MODE

Hit "D" and you will go to the Display Mode beginning with this frame.

## Display Mode

All frames that have been entered and are not locked-out will be displayed in order (1 thru 20). In between each message is an attention getting inter-frame design. The only way out of Display Mode is by holding down the "RUN/STOP" key at the left side of the keyboard. This will take you into the Menu Mode.

Menu Mode

At the top of the screen you will see "THE ELECTRONIC SIGN" followed by a request to "SELECT FUNCTION?". From the Menu you can perform all of the functions of "The Electronic Sign" and go to any other mode. To select a function, just hit the specified key.

I - INPUT ADDITIONAL FRAMES

This will put you in input mode at the next available



frame.

#### E - EDIT A FRAME'S MESSAGE

If you want to change something in a frame's text, hit E. You will then be asked which frame. Enter the frame number and you will go to Input Mode for that frame.

#### L - LOCKOUT FRAME FROM BEING DISPLAYED

If you want to keep a particular frame from being displayed, it may be locked-out of the display cycle. Hit L and you will be asked which frame, and reminded which frames are presently locked-out. If you change your mind, just hit RETURN. Otherwise, type in the frame number you wish to lock-out.

#### R - RE-ENABLE LOCKED-OUT FRAME

This allows you to put a frame that was previously locked-out back into the display cycle.

#### C - CLEAR SYSTEM AND INPUT NEW MESSAGES

Be careful! This allows you to completely erase all your frames' text from memory and start over fresh. All frames will be blank and none will be locked-out. When you hit C, you will be asked to verify your choice, just to be sure. If you changed your mind, hit N. Otherwise, hit Y and the system will be cleared and you will be put in Input Mode for Frame #1.

#### D - RETURN TO NORMAL DISPLAY MODE

This put "The Electronic Sign" back in Display mode.

#### Final Notes

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Remember that "The Electronic Sign" keeps your text intact and remembers which frames are locked-out even when you turn off the computer. This is because it contains an internal rechargeable battery. Proper functioning of this feature assumes that the computer will be on for long periods of time, at least 7 hours of continuous use once every few weeks, to keep the battery charged. Also, removing the cartridge from the computer increases the chances of losing your text from memory. Only remove the cartridge when necessary. Note that the system powers up in Display Mode if valid text is present. This way, you can plug the computer and TV into an AC timer for automatic operation.

In a short time you will have mastered operation of "The Electronic Sign". Feel free to experiment with its capabilities and soon you'll be creating your own exciting applications.