FIELD SERVICE SOFTWARE ASSISTANCE BROCHURE

O S - 8

Prepared by:

Rick Moore

INTRODUCTION

This is a reference document for Field Service use in

diagnosing system problems. The information presented in this chapter

is extracted from various OS-8 reference manuals and literature which

are listed in the appendix.

It is not intended to be a course on OS-8 or a substitute for

standard DEC software manuals. However, the topics presented here are

some of the more commonly used features and some of the commands that

should help you to better serve your customer through an enhanced

knowledge of his OS-8 operating system.

It is strongly recommended that you be extremely careful using

your customer's software as a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

If you do work on a customer's files, be sure to use copies of his

system only. Tell him what you feel the problem is and let him take

any corrective action.

OS-8 consists of an executive and library of system programs

which reside on a mass storage device called a "system device". This

could be a disk, dectape or floppy unit. The executive supervises the

overall program processing and consists of the following four major

components:

- Keyboard monitor ( KMON )

- Command Decoder ( CD )

- Device Handlers

- User Service Routine ( USR )

The Keyboard Monitor provides communications between the user

and the OS-8 Executive. The root segment of the monitor resides

perminently in memory and occupies 256 words. Commands from the

console terminal are interperted and whenever needed, the Command

Decoder, USR, KMON, and ODT are brought into memory in a series of

overlays while the contents of the memory used is swapped out to the

system scratch area. In this manner it is possible to run a baseline

system in only 8K words of memory.

The commands that are executed directly from the KMON are:

ASsign - assigns a new, user defined device name to a

perminant device.

DEASsign - restores perminant device names

GET - loads core image files into memory from a

device

START - starts execution of a program already in

memory

RUn - loads core image (.SV) files into memory from

a device and starts execution

R - loads core image (.SV) files into memory from

the SYStem device and starts execution

SAve - creates core image programs on a device

ODt - invokes the Octal Debugging Technique

DAte - sets / prints the system date

The Command Decoder is called when a system program needs

additional information from the operator concerning files to be acted

upon or devices to be used. You are in the Command Decoder whenever

the prompt character "\*" is issued.

Understanding the Command Decoder line format is probably the

most important step to successful usage of the OS-8 Operating System.

It is as follows:

\*OUTDEV:OUTFIL.EX<INDEV:INFILE.EX,INFILE.EX/SW1/SW2=N

... to translate ...

OUTDEV: - the output device (SYS:,RKB0:,DTA0:,LPT:)

OUTFIL.EX - the name of the output file and it's extension

INDEV: - the input device

INFILE.EX - the name of the input file and the extension

SW? - an optional switch ... differint for each

program

=N - numerical value (ie: in direct =N# of

columns)

There may be 0-3 input files, 0-9 output files, 0-3 option

switches, depending on the requirements of the individual program. In

several programs, it is not necessary to specify every detail ...

certain programs have default values for devices, switches, etc. The

only way to be sure of this is to know the program you are working

with.

Again, the value of learning the command decoder format cannot

be overstressed ... the same basic format is used thoughout DEC

software. (ie: RT-11, RSTS, etc.)

Device Handlers are subroutines which handle data transfer to

and from peripheral devices. Device handlers for the particular

hardware system you are using are activated by the program "BUILD".

These subroutines are then available to all OS-8 programs. It is

through the use of device handlers that a sort of "device

independence" is acheived.

The USR is a collection of subroutines that perform operations

of opening and closing files, loading device handlers, program

chaining, and calling the CD. The USR provides these functions not

only for the system itself, but for any programs running under OS-8.

**INITIALIZING OS-8**

Mount the OS-8 System on the appropriate hardware and execute

the bootstrap. This may be as simple as pressing a "BOOT" button or

require a toggle-in program from the operator's console. Various

bootstraps are listed in the appendix.

After the bootstrap is executed, the monitor will print a dot

"." on the console. At this point, KMON is active and the system is

ready to accept one of the monitor level commands listed on page 1.

**CCL**

The Concise Command Language ia a means of providing an easy to

understand "English-like" command interface between the operator and

the monitor. It translates the commands, chains to the appropriate

system programs, passes arguments and filespecs, and starts execution.

Any CCL command can be simulated by typing the necessary monitor and

CD responses manually. For example:

.DIR is equivalent to .R DIRECT

\*TTY:<SYS:/E=2

.COPY RXA1:<RKA0: is equivalent to .R FOTP

\*RXA1:\*.\*<RKA0:\*.\*

The use of CCL is optional in OS-8; manditory in OS-78. This is

because you cannot normally access monitor level commands in OS-78.

There is a way around this; by typing ".SET SYS OS8" it is possible to

turn on this attribute.

**GETTING DIRECTORIES**

.DIR - types directory of system device on the

console

.DIR-L - prints directory of system device on line

printer

.DIR RKB0:-L - prints directory of device RKB0 on line

printer

**SET**

The program "SET.SV" is called by the ".SET" CCL command and

can be used to modify some of the attributes of the various device

handlers. Some useful ones are:

.SET SYS OS8 - allows monitor level commands in

OS-78.

.SET SYS OS78 - normal OS-78 mode; CCL commands only

.SET SYS INIT - causes the command file "INIT.CM" to

be executed upon boot-up.

.SET SYS INIT [cmd] - causes the command [cmd] to be

executed upon boot-up.

.SET SYS NO INIT - negates the above

.SET LPT LA78 - allows PDP-8A (M8316) parrallel port

as controller for LA-180 (device

code=0570)

.SET LPT LA8A - restores LPT to normal 0660 device

code

.SET TTY SCOPE - causes a rubout to actually erase the

character from the screen.

.SET TTY NO SCOPE - causes the rubout to echo the

character/slash combination for

hardcopy terminals.

.SET TTY PAUSE - causes the terminal to pause every

"height" lines for ease of reading.

.SET TTY HEIGHT 24 - tells the handler the screen has 24

lines

.SET TTY WIDTH 80 - allows 80 character width to VT52

screen

\*\*\* WARNING \*\*\*

The command ".SET SYS NO INIT" must be given before attempting

to use the "BUILD" program, since execution of the "INIT.CM" file or

any CCL command will cause the previous contents of memory and the

system scratch area to be altered. Also, since the process of

executing this file may entail several overlays, the usefullness of it

on any media except disks or diskettes is questionable.

**OS-8 FILES**

There are three standard types of OS-8 file formats used by

OS-8 and associated system programs; ASCII, Binary and Core Image

(.SV).

ASCII and Binary files are packed three characters to every two

12 bit words as follows:

-----------------------------------------------

| | |

Word 1 | Char. 3 | Character 1 |

| (bits 0-3) | (bits 0-7) |

| | |

-----------------------------------------------

| | |

Word 2 | Char. 3 | Character 2 |

| (bits (4-7) | (bits 0-7) |

| | |

-----------------------------------------------

0 - 3 4 - 11

In Binary files, the binary data must be preceded by one or

more frames of leader/trailer code (ASCII 200 code). The first

character must be either 100-177 octal (origin setting for absolute

binary files), 240-257 octal (a COMMON declaration frame for

relocatable binary files), or 300 octal which is an origin setting.

The end of binary data is one or more frames of leader trailer code.

ASCII and Binary files are terminated by a CTRL/Z code (ACSII 232).

A Core Image file consists of a header followed by the actual

core image. The header is called the Core Control Block (CCB). It

consists of first 128 words of the first block (256 words) of the

file. The CCB is a table of information that contains the length of

the file, the program's starting address, and the Job Status Word

(JSW). The CCB for a program at the time it is loaded into core is

always saved in words 200-377 (octal) of block 37 on the system's

scratch area. It is placed there by the GET or RUN operations or by

the ABSLDR program. This information is then used when performing a

SAVE without arguments.

**FILE NAMES and EXTENSIONS**

Files are referenced symbolically by a name of up to six

characters followed, optionally, by a period and a two character

extension. The extension to a file name is generally used to type the

files according to their formats or defaults to particular system

programs.

In most cases, the user will want to conform to the standard

file name extensions established for OS-8. If the extension is not

specified for a files, some system programs will append an assumed

extension by default. This default extension can be overidden by

stating the extension in the CD line explicedly.

The most common OS-8 standard default extensions are:

SV - core image programs

BN - binary programs

PA - PAL8 assembly language sources

BA - BASIC source files

BI - BATCH control files

SY - system heads

DG - diagnostic program \*\*

BX - DECX8 exercisor modules \*\*

X8 - customised DECX8 system exercisor \*\*

\*\* refers to psuedo standards imposed by the New England

District PDP-8 Diagnostic System.

**FILE MANIPULATIONS**

Files can be transfered between OS-8 devices by using either

"FOTP.SV" (File Oriented Transfer Program) or "PIP.SV" (Peripheral

Interchange Program) or the CCL commands that call them. These

commands and their uses are:

COPy - copies files from one device to another

DELete - deletes files from a device

LIst - lists an ASCII files on the LPT

REName - changes the name of a file in the directory

SQuish - eliminates all empty and deleted files on a

device

TYpe - types an ASCII file on the console terminal

ZERO - zeroes the directory of a device, deleting

all existing files on that device

For example, to copy file FOO.PA from RXA1: to RKB0:

.COPY RKB0:<RXA1:FOO.PA

( note the similiarity between this and the format of

the Command Decoder Line on page 2.)

To copy an entire device using PIP and FOTP type:

.R PIP first transfer the system heads

\*RKA1:<RKA0:/Y/Z

\*RKB1:<RKB0:/Y/Z

.R FOTP now all the files

\*RKA1:<RKA0:\*.\* using wildcard transfers

\*RKB1:<RKB0:\*.\*

For floppies, it is easier since the program "RXCOPY.SV" or the

CCL command ".DUPLicate" will copy the entire device.

**SYSTEM HEADS**

The "/Y" option of PIP.SV can be used for system head

manipulation. A system head is 50 blocks long and is located at the

beginning of the system device. It contains the system bootstrap, the

monitor, and all its overlays. System heads are sometimes stored as

files on a device for ease of use with the extension ".SY".

To move a system head:

.R PIP

\*RKA1:<RKA0:/Y

if "RKA1" is a virgin device, a skeleton directory must be

created, so type:

\*RKA1:<RKA0:/Y/Z

**USING WILDCARDS**

Certain commands allow wildcards in the file name

specifications. These commands are COPY, DELETE, DIRECT, LIST, RENAME,

and TYPE.

Wildcards allow a filename or extension to be totally replaced

with an asterisk (\*) or partially repalced with a question mark (?).

Wildcards are particularly useful when doing multiple file transfers.

This is illustrated in the following examples:

TEST1.\* - all files with the name TEST1 and any

extension

\*.BN - all files with a BN extension and any name

\*.\* - all files with any name and any extension

TEST2.B? - all files with the name TEST2 and any

extension starting with a B

TES??.PA - all files with a PA extension and any name

from 3 to 5 characters beginning with TES

the asterisk amd question mark can be used together

???.\* - all files with any extension and with file

names of three characters or less

**BUILD**

The program "BUILD.SV" is the system generation program for

OS-8 which allows the user to:

1. Maintain and update device handlers in an existing OS-8

system.

2. Add device handlers to a new or existing system.

3. Change the system characteristics to reflect hardware

modifications.

Device handlers are supplied with the OS-8 system and are in

the format of Binary (.BN) files.

To run the Build program, type:

.RUN SYS BUILD

NOTE:

It is important that the user specify the "RUN" command,

rather than the "R" command when loading BUILD into core.

This will allow the CCB to be stored on the system scratch

area for use with the SAVE command!

Also, since the system scratch area is used at times when

the "INIT.CM" file is executed, it is imperative that the

command ".SET SYS NO INIT" be given prior to beginning the

BUILD process. After the program is SAVEd, ".SET SYS INIT"

can be reinstituted.

This matter cannot be overemphisized ... SAving "BUILD"

without these precautions will appear to work and the

system will boot without failure, however, the next time

BUILD is run, it will not work! This is because the proper

CCB parameters will have been lost.

**RUNNING BUILD**

Changing a system's parameters can be a complicated procedure

with too many variables to be explained in this document. For complete

instructions on BUILD, see the appropriated OS-8 Manual.

- DEVICES

Some of the devices that are available in the OS-8 system are:

SYS: - the system device

DSK: - the default device (usually SYS:)

RKA0: - "A" side of RK05 drive #0

RKB0: - "B" side of RK05 drive #0

TTY: - console teletype

LPT: - line printer

LQP: - letter quality printer (Diablo)

PTR: - paper tape reader

PTP: - paper tape punch

DTA0: - dectape drive #0

DTA1: - dectape drive #1

RXA0: - RX01 floppy drive #0

RXA1: - RX01 floppy drive #1

RL0A: - RL01 area "A" drive 0

RL0B: - RL01 area "B" drive 0

RL0C: - RL01 area "C" drive 0

**FUTIL**

The OS-8 File UTILity program was orginally developed by Jim

Crapuchettes of Menlo Computer Associate,Inc., Menlo Park, CA. It is

now included within the OS-8 Extension Kit after release V3D, and is

also contained on the New England District PDP-8 Diagnostic System

after release V8.04.

FUTIL enables a user to examine and modify the contents of mass

storage devices, including the SYStem device, and is therefore as

dangerous as it is useful! It can be used to recover damaged files,

repair destroyed directories, patch programs on the mass storage

device, and check for bad blocks on the device.

It is this last feature that is particularly useful to us in

Field Service as we often have questions concerning the validity of a

customer's disk or diskette. The following procedure can verify this:

.R FUTIL

SET DEVICE RXA0 floppy drive 0 is the target

device

SCAN 0-755 scans the 756 (octal) blocks on

the device

EXIT returns to OS-8

If any bad blocks were encountered, the program would report

BAD BLOCK nnn where "nnn" was faulty

The cause of this could be due to either a bad CRC character

due to blown data (can be recopied) or blown format (device must be

reformatted). In the case of floppies, the later condition is fatal as

they cannot be reformatted.

FUTIL can be used to scan devices regardless of their program

contents, for example, OS-8, COS 300, or any customer written file

structure can be scanned, as long as standard sector format is used.

to SCAN an RK05 Disk:

.R FUTIL

SET DEVICE RKA0 or RKA1, etc.

SCAN 0-6257 there are 6260 blocks

SET DEVICE RKB0 now the other side

SCAN 0-6257

EXIT

.

NOTE:

At this time, a note on the "sides" of a disk is in

order. The RK05 is broken up into two (2) logical

devices called "RKA0" and "RKB0" as the RL01 is broken

into three (3) devices called "RL0A", RL0B", and "RL0C"

by OS-8. This is because of the system's inability to

address the entire disk and the limited number of

entries the directories can hold.

These "sides" are actually not physical sides (who ever

heard of a three sided RL01), but refer (on the RK05)

to the first 6260 sectors as "RKA0" and the remaining

6260 sectors as "RKB0". A look at the hardware shows

that after the sector counter overflows (at 16 sectors)

the heads switch to the other surface. After the sector

counter overflows again, the heads switch back and then

the cylinder address increments. Thus RKA0 is on the

outer tracks of the disk and RKB0 is on the inner

tracks.