

## Operating System Software Disks for Mackie Hard Disk Recorders

I frequently receive “where can I buy?” requests for the floppy disks necessary to load, update, or refresh the software on the Mackie HDR24/96 and MDR24/96 hard disk recorders.

Mackie always intended for users to make their own installation disks from files downloaded from the Mackie web site. The procedure requires a computer that's equipped with a floppy disk drive, some blank floppy disks, and the downloaded builder files. You'd download the ZIP file for your recorder's operating system, unzip it, and run each of the two files with a floppy disk (one for each file) in the computer's floppy drive. There are versions for both Windows and MacOS. Running the downloaded files creates the two floppy disks needed to load the operating system.

Mackie never sold pre-made disks other than the ones that originally came with the recorder, so after those get lost, worn out, or there was a software update, users were on their own. As a reminder, the HDR24/96 was released in 1999. Many things have happened in the world of computers since 1999. A few that have made making new OS installation disks difficult or inconvenient are:

- It's been years since factory-built computers have included a floppy drive, so unless, like me, you keep old computers alive until the wheels fall off, you probably don't have floppy drive in your computer.
- Blank floppy disks are considered obsolete (likely because of the lack of computers with floppy drives) and while still being made by a couple of manufacturers, are getting difficult to buy.

Seems like there's a good business opportunity here, but it seems that nobody, even sellers of parts on eBay, are making and selling installation disks either. In case you wondered, there's nothing illegal about doing this. I've been reluctant to become a source of OS disk myself even though I could make a few easy bucks from it – For me, it's not worth the risk if for some reason they don't work in the customer's machine and I have to send out another set.

Therefore I continue to encourage HDR and MDR owners to set themselves up to make their own disks while the tools and media that you need are still available. A USB floppy drive for your computer will work fine, there are still dealers selling new blank floppies (many sell through Amazon at an amazingly wide range of prices), and the software to make the disks is still available for downloading, at least as of this writing – April 2021.

I have a few USB floppy drives, all have different brand names, and all work equally well. It doesn't matter which one you get, just get one while the getting is (still) good.

Some examples of USB floppy drives and blank disks here (Amazon) <https://tinyurl.com/7mweed9m> That URL won't last forever, but you can always do an on-line search. While blank disks used to be cheap as dirt, it seems that the better prices for name brands are about \$2.00 to \$2.50 in packs of ten.

One thing I'll caution you about is that the Mackie download web site has the latest and last versions – Version 1.4 for the HDR and Version 1.3 for the MDR. The newest version uses a different format for the project file to make it compatible for the (short-lived) SDR24/96. If you've been using an earlier version of the software, you should take the upgrade. It's backward-compatible with the old project file format in that it will still play your old projects, but in order to add new tracks to an old format project, you'll need to update the project file to the new format. When you open an older project file, the new version will invite you convert the project to the new format. It's OK to do that. The conversion doesn't touch the original project's audio files and the original project file remains intact. But there's another level in the folder structure for new format projects, so you'll need to learn a new place to look for your projects, including old projects that you've converted to the new format. But you'll catch on.

Shameless plug: Mackie never wrote anything detailed about the new project format other than what's in the software release notes. A detailed explanation of what you'll need to know is in my book:

<https://mikeriversaudio.wordpress.com/mackie-hard-disk-recorder/>

And while you're there, you can use a few of the disks you haven't used for the operating system (you should make an extra copy while you're at it) for a few handy tools in my HDR Utilities (free download) including a program that builds a bootable floppy disk that will automatically make the correct CMOS settings for both the standard and large drive BIOS as long as your recorder will still boot from a floppy [READ THE INSTRUCTIONS]

It seems that these recorders can run forever with a little loving care, so don't let them go just because you can't find the software for them – it's there for the taking.