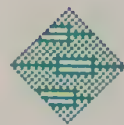# Foreign Interpreters for Hire

DaynaFile

MS-DOS floppy disk drives. **Pros:** *Easy to use and install.* **Cons:** *Expensive.* **List price:** *5¼-inch 360K single drive $595, 5¼-inch 360K and 3½-inch 720K double drive $849, other configurations $595 to $1029;* MacLink Plus *(OEM version) $95.* **Requires:** *512KE.*

Apple PC 5.25 Drive

MS-DOS floppy disk drive. **Pros:** *Inexpensive.* **Cons:** *Uses the expansion slot, supports only one disk format (5¼-inch 360K).* **List price:** *$399.* **Requires:** *SE or Mac II.*

If you've been the odd one out at your IBM-dominated office, two new MS-DOS floppy disk drives from Apple and Dayna Communications will quiet those IBM skeptics once they've seen how easily you can load and run a Lotus *1-2-3* or a *dBase III* file stored on the 5¼-inch IBM-compatible floppy drive on your Macintosh. But look closely before you buy one of these drives. Look closely, because you'll find some major design differences between them.

DaynaFile

DaynaFile is available in either single- or double-drive configurations. You can choose a 5¼-inch 360K drive, a 3½-inch 720K drive, or a 5¼-inch 1.4MB drive that can also read a 5¼-inch 1.2MB disk. For example, you could order a 5¼ 360K single drive, or you could get a two-drive unit that handles both 5¼-inch 360K and 3½-inch 720K disks.

Installation involves merely connecting the drive cable to your Mac's SCSI port. A second SCSI port can be used to chain the DaynaFile to an external hard disk. An external power supply plugs into the back of the drive with a cord that's long enough to keep the power supply out of your way— a helpful feature, as the power pack is quite bulky. However, DaynaFile has a couple of minor flaws. Since it must be on before you start up the Mac, you'll have to restart the Mac if you forget to turn the DaynaFile on first. And because there's no power status light to remind you the machine's on, it's easy to leave the DaynaFile on accidentally all day (or all night).

Once you've connected the drive, you must copy the DaynaFile device driver into your System Folder. This step takes no more than a minute, and it only has to be done once. When you start up, a PC disk icon appears on the desktop if a disk is in the drive. Clicking on the icon displays the files, and subdirectories appear as folders that can be opened and read exactly like native Mac folders.

Dayna Communications sells an OEM version of *MacLink Plus,* file-conversion software that supports virtually every type of popular PC file format, including *WordStar, MultiMate, Microsoft Word, 1-2-3, dBase,* and DCA (document content architecture) files. But you can just as easily use the off-the-shelf version of *MacLink Plus.* DaynaFile also supports *Apple File Exchange.*

Even with file-conversion software, you may have to do some additional work to prepare a file for use. For example, when you translate a *WordStar* document to *MacWrite,* the software embeds ruler lines throughout the file. Similar ruler and tab clean-up problems occur when you convert *MultiMate* documents to *MacWrite.*

Clear, well-written documentation that accompanies both the DaynaFile and *MacLink Plus* should answer any questions you might have.

Apple Drive

After I'd put the DaynaFile through its paces, the Apple drive looked one-dimensional by comparison. For starters, the drive needs a controller card that's in-

One possible DaynaFile configuration would include two drives—a 5¼-inch 360K drive and a 3½-inch 720K drive.

stalled in the expansion slot. And only one format is available: 5¼-inch 360K. To make matters worse, you can't even use it without an SE or a Mac II.

To install the floppy disk controller card you'll need to take your Mac to an Apple dealer. Once the card is installed, using the drive is fairly simple. A cable (provided) connects the drive from the controller card in the expansion slot to the disk drive. The drive's slim gray case blends well with the SE, but you'll soon find yourself looking beyond cosmetics.

In comparison, the Apple drive is available in only one format—a single 5¼-inch 360K drive.

Since the device does not support the Finder, no desktop icon is provided. You'll have to load *Apple File Exchange,* Apple's file-transfer utility, before you can look at the files. Although the Apple drive is a hair quicker than DaynaFile in reading and displaying a list of files on the disk, the extra step can be annoying.

Unfortunately, the current version of *Apple File Exchange* supports only text, binary, and DCA files. (Now that Apple has introduced a translation architecture, other formats will probably be available soon.) Another limitation is the rather thin documentation, which doesn't offer much advice on troubleshooting.

Before you choose one of these drives, carefully consider your needs. If the only MS-DOS files you deal with are on 5¼-inch 360K disks and you're a dyed-in-the-wool Apple fan—you may want to give the