

MEGA CD INTERFACE

Users Guide

For ATARI Home Computers



Revisions made July 2019

- 1) Updated the User's Guide graphics**
- 2) Clarified user instructions**
- 3) Added Interface Schematics**
- 4) Added a magazine article excerpt**

Introduction

The Mega CD Interface (aka CD ROM PRO XL/XE) was developed by Jiri Richter (JRC) from the Czech Republic.

The Mega CD Interface allows you to connect a CD-Player to the ATARI's SIO port. Once connected it allows you to load programs from a CD. The programs are stored on the CD in a compressed analog AUDIO format which allows the program to load in seconds but you need to run a loader driver before loading the program from the CD. The loader driver is located on the Mega CD Loader Cartridge.

Note: There is also a **Universal Visicopy** loader that can be found on the JRC TOOLBOX Cartridge that can load the programs.

The Mega CD System consists of 5 components & 2 Guides

- 1) Mega CD Interface & Users Guide
- 2) Mega CD Loader Cartridge
- 3) Mega CD Program CD & CD Program Guide
- 4) Audio Cable
- 5) CD-Player (provided by you)

To load games from the Mega CD Interface follow these steps:

- 1) Plug the SIO connector from the Mega CD Interface into an open SIO port on your ATARI computer or disk drive.
- 2) Connect the line-out (headset output) of the CD-Player to the RCA inputs of the Mega CD Interface using the audio cable.

Note: The Mega CD Interface accepts Mono audio input so if your CD contains games on both Audio Channels (Left/Right) you must select the Audio channel with the switch on the Mega CD Interface.

- 3) Review the Mega CD Program Guide for the track and channel of the program you want to load. Verify that the Audio channel select switch located on the Mega CD Interface is in the correct position (left or right) to load the desired program from the Program CD.
- 4) Place the Mega CD Loader Cartridge (label facing towards you) into the cartridge slot on your ATARI Computer. Turn on your ATARI with the Mega CD Loader Cartridge inserted and the cartridge's button pushed down to the on position.
- 5) Once your ATARI is on, release the button on the Mega CD Loader Cartridge (this will load the Universal Turbo Loader into memory).
- 6) Browse the Mega CD Program CD with the CD-Player "Back" / "Forward" buttons and Select the track you want to load.(don't forget to push **PLAY** on the CD-Player)
- 7) Loader will load a short menu called 'Tornado'.

- 8) In each track on the CD there are usually 4 games. (In both the Left & Right Channels) the '<' symbol will mark which program the CD-Player is currently over.
- 9) Select the game/program you want to load by pressing the keys 1-4. It will be marked with the '>' symbol. (See image below)



- 10) After the program loads '><' it will automatically start, and you can push **STOP** on the CD-Player.

Excerpt from a 1995 article on the CD ROM PRO XL/XE

We assume that the CD-AUDIO format, i.e. audio recordings, can be played by any device that contains a CD drive. Therefore, we proceeded to realize a CD on which the programs will be recorded similar to the cassettes, only slightly better. However, during the experiments it turned out that the CD can withstand such a record density that we can record almost all the programs contained in our PD games database. The audio CD is divided into individual tracks, and the extra stereo provides extra left and right channels. In our MEGA CD we will talk about tracks as track A and B.

On each record and track, there are four programs at the beginning of the menu. This stratification is necessary because the AUDIO CD can contain a maximum of 99 tracks, which is up to 198 separate data sets in two channels. There would be little for 600 (or more) programs, so the programs are always grouped together in two approximately equally long quarters with a selection through a special menu. The menu is recorded with a Super Turbo format of about 5000 baud. The other data draws on the quality of the CD and transmits at 22,000 baud. This in TURBO format overcomes the boot from the floppy drive about 2x.

Now there is something to connect the CD player to the computer. Transmission is a common audio output, either line or headphone. However, the computer requires TTL logic, so the signal needs to be preprocessed. A suitable interface connection is shown in the figure. Those who are more experienced will certainly not have problems with the realization and I recommend that the experienced CD buy a CD interface, its price is definitely not high.

Jiri Richter

NOTE:

This Users Guide was created by Jon Bowers using original documents, information from the internet, and magazine articles from the time period.