

DRVCHK and DRVLINK Hard Disk Utilities

DRVCHK and DRVLINK are two hard disk utilities. In an ideal world you should need neither, and if all is well there should be no harm done if you try them. The programs will work on "QLWA" type hard disks, i.e. on the Miracle Harddisk, all ACSI and SCSI harddisks connected to ATARIs, the QXL and QL formatted disks on the Q60. They will also work with QXL.WIN type hard disk containers, as used on QPC, SMSQmulator, Q68 and newer versions of SMSQ/E for the Q60. We have no experience with the Falkenberg Harddisk interface (it might trash your harddisk, we don't know), but it will not work on the QUBIDE.

DRVCHK is rather like a soft format which checks the readability of the free sectors on the drive. It does not check the sectors which have been allocated to files. If you find that reading some files is becoming unreliable, you should copy the contents to a new file and then delete the old file. This returns the sectors to the free space list. Executing DRVCHK will check all the free sectors and eliminate unreadable sectors. Unreliable sectors may not get eliminated and it might be useful to execute DRVCHK more than once. If you have a rather unreliable drive, you may find it worthwhile executing DRVCHK after a hard disk format as an additional check.

DRVLINK is intended to repair the hard disk map of contents when this has been corrupted. (Note that as the hard disk map is in the form of linked lists similar to those used by MSDOS and other low grade operating systems, continuing to create, delete or modify files on the disk when you suspect that it may be corrupted is very unwise. It is safe to copy files to new backup disks, but DO NOT OVERWRITE old backup disks, or you may find that your backups are corrupted as well!). The hard disk map can be corrupted by a variety of software: the main culprits are probably the GST Linker (old version, not the one supplied by Quanta) and any software which draws arcs or uses ATAN, ASIN or ACOS (QDOS only, not SMSQ/E!).

The most obvious symptoms of corrupted maps are "drive full" messages when the drive is not full or "bad or changed medium" when accessing files. In the latter case, execute DRVLINK first, then delete the bad files, and finally execute DRVCHK to check the freed sectors.

DRVLINK may not completely repair the hard disk map, but it should put it into a state where it will not get any worse. BEWARE: although DRVLINK is believed to be safe, there could possibly be circumstances where the cure could be worse than the disease. Corrupted maps are quite rare, so there has not been much opportunity to exercise DRVLINK.