wDrive

from KBOOHK

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Apple2Online.com

According to KBOOHK, the wDrive "is a 5.25" floppy drive emulator for the Apple Disk][" meaning it uses the 20-pin 2x10 block connector that the Disk][uses with the Disk][Interface Card. I decided to test it on an Apple IIc.

The wDrive

The wDrive comes already assembled in a nice white case which resembles a miniature Apple disk drive (Figure 1). The drive measures approximately 68 mm (2.625") L x 40 mm (1.5") W x 21 mm (0.875") H.
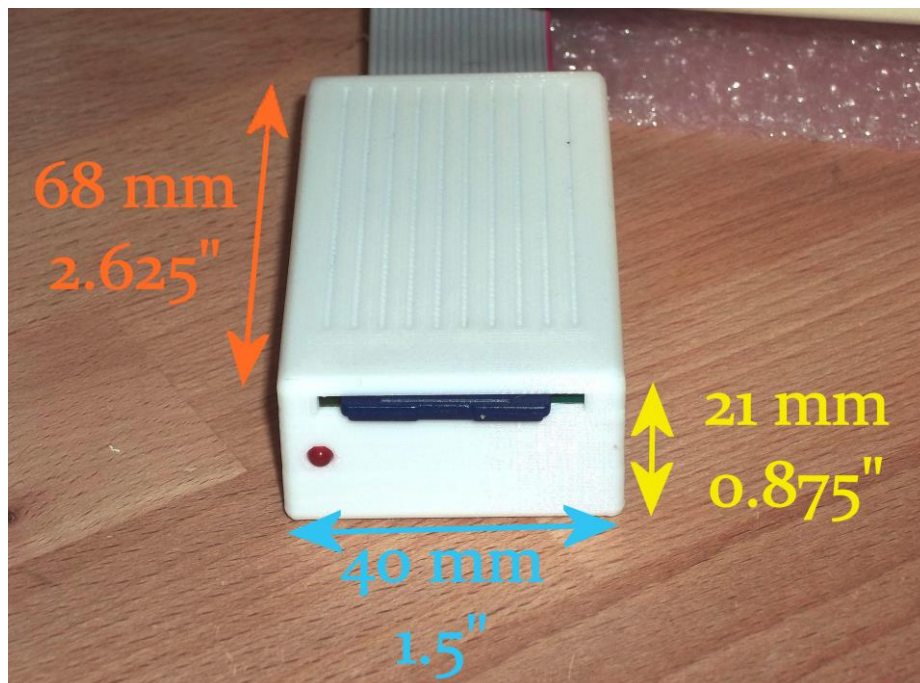

Figure 1

The wDrive uses SD cards as media, and supports SD, SDHC & SDXC cards, formatted in Windows FAT16 or FAT32. Just format the SD card, copy your Apple II disk images to the card, and you're ready to go. wDrive supports Apple 5.25" disk image formats nib, edf, dsk, do, po and woz (1.0 & 2.0).

Connecting to an Apple IIc

I purchased an Internal/External Drive Switcher from Big Mess O Wires for $19 and I highly recommend having one! It allows you to connect a drive that use 20-pin 2x10 block connectors (that the Disk][uses) to the IIc and then select whether to use the internal IIc drive or the external drive via a simple 2-position switch on the Drive Switcher (Figure 2).
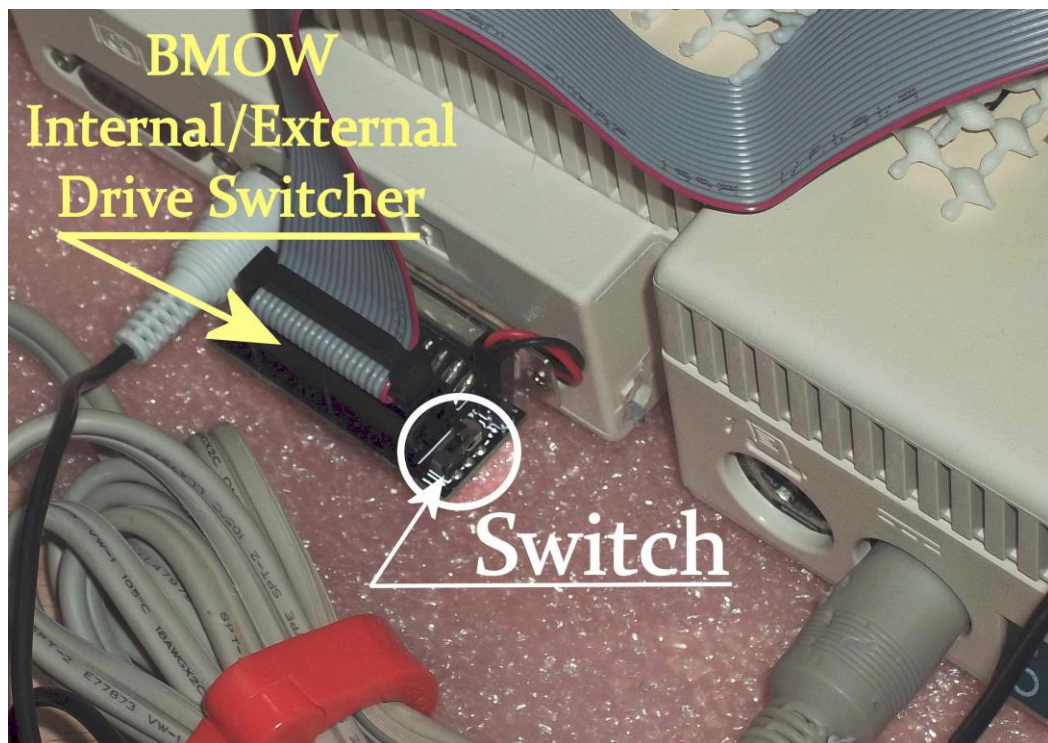

Figure 2

Place the switch in the external drive position, connect the wDrive to the switch using the wDrive cable included, and power the IIc ON.

Using the wDrive

Once you turn the Apple IIc ON, you will see a menu on the wDrive similar to the one illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

The display shows the list of disk image files you have on the SD card. You move up and down the list with the UP and DOWN buttons and select the disk you wish to use with the SELECT button. (Please note: the wDrive does not come with the buttons labeled. I labeled them myself.) In addition to these three menu buttons, there is a RESET button on the side (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Once you select the disk image you wish to run, you simply warm-boot the IIc and that disk image is processed.

Features

According to the information sheet that comes with the wDrive, features include:

- Support for Apple II 5.25 disk image formats: nib, dsk, do, po, edf & woz (1 & 2);
- Support for 13-sector disk images. Simply press the LEFT button when booting 13-sector images;
- Support for 32M, 800K 2mg/hdv images for smartport interface;
- Support softSP, which is a software driver to implement smartport porotocol so that Apple II machines without smartport interface can use smartport device through the Disk][interface;
- Supports SD, SDHC and SDXC memory cards using FAT16/FAT32.

Limitations

There may be a maximum of 100 files per each folder, and a maximum of 10 levels of subfolders.

Evaluation

I found the wDrive very easy to setup and use. The drive itself comes completely assembled in an attractive case that resembles an Apple drive and includes the data cable needed to connect to the computer/controller card. I paid $81.00 including shipping. The wDrive **does not** come with an SD card, so you need to supply that yourself.

For connecting to my Apple IIc, I used the Internal/External Drive Switcher from BMOW and that cost $19 + S&H. Well worth the money to have this peripheral in your toolbox!!!

Although marketed for use as an "Apple Disk][drive emulator" it will work with an Apple II+, IIe, IIGS with an Apple Disk][Interface Card and with an Apple IIc with a Disk Switcher.

I would recommend the wDrive for those looking for a disk emulator for use with the Disk][Interface Card.