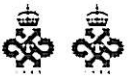


QUANTEL



RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Pear Tree Lane, Newbury, Berkshire RG13 2LT, England.
Tel: (0635) 521222, Tlx: 849475 QUANTL G, Fax: (0635) 521258.

5th December 1989

Mr J B Lohmeyer
(X3T9.2 Chair)
NCR Corporation
3718 N. Rock Road
Wichita
KS 67226
USA

Dear Sir

I am writing to you in your capacity as chair of the ANSI X3T9.2 committee responsible for the SCSI-2 specification.

Firstly, may I request that our company name, QUANTEL (all upper case) be added to the list of vendor identification as outlined in Appendix J of the SCSI specifications.

Secondly, may I propose a new SCSI command, which would be optional for all device types. The proposal for the command is caused by a sense of dismay upon surveying Table 7-41:ASC and ASCQ Assignments. The length of this list is daunting for users of SCSI devices if they are to attempt to analyse all the sense codes which they might receive. On the other hand, it cannot be exhaustive because the constant advance of new technology will always bring new ways for devices to malfunction. In all but a minority of cases, the only action that software in the initiator can take is to report the error to a (human) user. If the ASC and ASCQ values are reported as numbers, this requires the user to have to hand an up-to-date version of the standard in order to interpret the error.

I therefore propose a new command, which I have called Request Text Sense. This command would be called in the same circumstances as the Request Sense command. It returns an Ascii string which will be approximately the contents of table 7-41, possible with numeric information such as position added e.g UNRECOVERED READ ERROR AT SECTOR 1234h. It is not intended to replace the Request

Sense command. In particular, the Sense Data should still contain all information which might potentially be used by the Initiator to recover from the error. It would be useful to extend the Sense Data command by specifying a bit which, if set, would inform that Text Sense data is available for that error. Obviously each device will need test expansions only for that (usually small) subset of the available errors which it can generate itself. The error messages thus generated will always be complete and up-to-date.

Could an additional field in the Sense Data offer some advice upon recovery action? Values might be:

- No action needed (e.g. EEC successful)
- Advise retry (e.g. read error, which may be soft)
- Advise retry elsewhere (e.g. bad block on write)
- Hard fault, no recovery possible (e.g. serious unit malfunction).

Thirdly, I enclose herewith for your interest and that of your colleagues on the SCSI committee a draft specification of the way in which Quantel proposes to use SCSI for an inter-vendor shared filing system. We are showing this as a proposal to some manufacturers of allied equipment to our own in the Broadcast Graphics field. It is marked Confidential because we have not yet committed to implementing it (and will not do so until a reasonable number of potential users have shown interest) and Provisional because it will undoubtedly alter during implementation. Despite these headings, intended to prevent its being regarded as a firm commitment, you are welcome to show it to anyone else whom you may feel would have an interest in this mode of using SCSI. If we (as I expect) proceed to implement it, we will be making the production version of this document public.

Yours faithfully



Alec Cawley
Head of Software

Enc

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