Date: August 31, 1993

To: X3T9.2

From: Steve Finch, Editor ATA Extensions
             Silicon Systems

Subject: How should the ATA-2 Standard Bus Cabling be handled?

In the initial ATA standard, we had a basic 40 pin ribbon cable. Later, a second connector was added, as an informative annex, which defined a 50/44 pin connector. In the ATA-2 document we are adding another informative annex, the same 68 pin connector as used for PCMCIA but for use in an ATA only environment.

The way these options are currently addressed can be very confusing. The 50/44 pin connector doesn't have a cable defined and may need one. The 68 pin connector may not ever need a cable. There is also the possibility of a zero length bus for the standard 40 pin bus.

When we begin definition of higher speed transfers, bus and cable related specifications will become even more complicated, as clear definition of cables, drivers, receivers, and termination will be required. By reorganizing this information, making the various cabling and connectors separate and distinct options in the main document, we can better define the various configurations possible and identify which specifications are applicable to a particular environment.

In addition, I question the reliability in referencing a manufacturer's part number for defining the bus connectors. As much as I hate to bring up the subject of connectors, I believe we should replace the part numbers references with drawings and appropriate dimensions.

I move that all bus connectors and cabling of the ATA-2 Standard, including information now contained in informative annexes, be made an integral part of the ATA-2 base document, and that the reference to manufacturer's part numbers be replaced with appropriate diagrams.

If approved, I will contact each of the referenced manufacturers and (hopefully) obtain the necessary figures and diagrams. In addition, if necessary, I will chair a special working group session to address any connector issues which result. (Ugh!)