

is a "reader-friendly front-end", i.e. an explanation for general audiences without technical background. Also some minor modifications have been done to the technical section.

Some material has been acquired from the Net and some (most) from my own experiments.

New contributions and new questions are most welcome.

Grammar corrections are accepted, because I am not a native speaker of English.

Information presented here should be correct as far as I know, but utter rubbish may have crept in, so proceed carefully.

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### 3) What is this?

What is Macrovision? Macrovision is a videotape copy protection method for VHS video cassette recorders. It is used on pre-recorded videotapes, and it seems to be more common in North America than in Europe. If you want a tape that will have Macrovision, get a Disney one.

(Someone else might know who invented, marketed and/or used it, etc.)

What does it look like? When dubbing a protected tape, the picture that has gone through the recording VCR will get dark and then normal again periodically. The picture may also become unstable when it is at its darkest. Some televisions do not like Macrovision either; the top of the picture might be unstable all the time and the colors may flicker.

If you have a TV that has an adjustment for picture height or vertical hold, you can play with those. Macrovision signals can be seen as very bright and very dark regions (stripes) near the top of the picture.

Is there an easy and economical way to get rid of it? Not really. There are three main alternatives:

Modify the VCR. It is easy in principle, just change the value of one capacitor or resistor in the destination deck. The problem is, you'd probably have to get a service manual to find out which one.

Furthermore, you still don't get rid of the protection; it just makes the copying possible.

Make an eliminator yourself. It is a relatively straightforward task (more in the technical section), if you know electronics.

Most people don't, unfortunately.

Buy a commercial "stabilizer". This method is definitely easy, but not the cheapest.

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### 4) A non-technical explanation

Here is a simple explanation of how the method works. It exploits the automatic gain control (AGC) circuit in the recorder. The purpose of the AGC is to adjust the level of the video signal in such a way that the recording capabilities of the tape are fully used. This means that weak signals are