



From: Personal Storage Product Marketing
Date: July 2000
Number: MN-351



M A R K E T I N G N E W S

F R O M S E A G A T E

Ultra ATA/100: The Next Generation of Performance

It's no secret that PC users—whether in the office, the data center or the living room—expect systems to offer ever-increasing performance at ever-decreasing prices. The path through which data travels between the system and the hard drive—the ATA interface—is an important enabler of this performance. ATA (Advanced Technology Architecture) is an industry-standard specification developed by a consortium of storage-industry leaders, of which Seagate® is an actively contributing member.

Recently, the industry announced an important advancement in the development of this interface. Ultra ATA/100 now enables throughput of up to 100 megabits per second—33 percent more internal bandwidth than its predecessor, Ultra ATA/66. Seagate was an active participant in the definition and implementation of this new standard. Upon announcing U Series 5™ on the same day as the new specification was announced, Seagate became one of the industry's first to offer this new technology to customers.

Enabling Higher-Performing Components and Systems

Ultra ATA/100 provides the bandwidth for tomorrow's faster systems. Although the new interface does not, by itself, increase performance noticeably in most PC applications, Ultra ATA/100 offers the internal bandwidth needed to take full advantage of faster components. As motherboards, hard drives and other components of the system operate at faster speeds, this increased bandwidth enables PC systems (and other systems using the Ultra ATA/100 interface) to continue the upward performance curve without corresponding increases in system cost.

Exceptions to this include resource-intensive applications such as ATA RAID. Such applications, which already push the internal bandwidth limits of Ultra ATA/66, will see immediate performance gains when implemented with Ultra ATA/100.

Smooth Transition to Ultra ATA/100

As with any technology transition, there is always concern about backward-compatibility with existing systems. Also, many customers will be concerned about the availability of compatible motherboards. The following information may make the transition to Ultra ATA/100 smoother for many Seagate customers:

- Seagate Ultra ATA/66 drives will continue to be available in volume through 3QCY2000.
- Volume availability of U Series 5 drives should coincide with availability of Ultra ATA/100 motherboards.
- U Series 5 drives can autosense whether they are attached to Ultra ATA/66 or Ultra ATA/100 motherboards, making the drive compatible with either type of system.
- Ultra ATA/100 cables are electromechanically the same as Ultra ATA/66—standard 80-conductor, 40-pin cables.

Comprehensive Testing Eliminates Compatibility Headaches

At our design center in Longmont, Colorado, Seagate's Applications Engineering Lab is working to ensure a smooth transition to Ultra ATA/100. We continue to work with our motherboard manufacturing partners and others to test Seagate Ultra ATA/100 drives under varying combinations of PC components. The resulting product is one that can be installed with confidence, knowing that most of the incompatibility issues have been tested out of the drive.

Seagate also offers its world-class technical support to customers that have specific issues with the transition to Ultra ATA/100. Please contact your authorized distributor or Seagate representative for telephone numbers and locations.



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