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Specification



G00002

1. Title of the Invention:

Rotating storage apparatus and information recording method

2. Detailed Description of the Invention:

[Filed of the invention]

The present invention relates to a rotating storage apparatus and information recording method, and in particular, to a technology that is effective when used as protective measures against shock and vibration during the operation of information storage apparatus in which information is recorded on a rotating recording medium such as a hard disk.

[Background art]

Recent years, information processing systems have been widely used in portable devices such as notebook personal computers. In the portable devices, vibration and shock are unavoidable and protective measures against vibration and shock have become important. Improvement of shock resistance is very important especially in a storage apparatus containing a rotating recording medium such as a hard disk because it has a moving mechanism for changing relative positional relationship between a head having read/write capability and the rotating medium.

As well known to those skilled in the art, tracks are provided on a rotating recording medium (hard disk) in a hard disk drive, for example, and a head is positioned over a track to record a magnetic signal from the head in the track. If the head underwent external shock or vibration while the head were positioned over a track and information from the head were being recorded (written) in the track, the head would go off

the predetermined track (off-tracking) and the information would be written in a position at a distance from the predetermined track. The information written in such an off-tracking condition may not only cause a read error but also, if information has been recorded in adjacent tracks, affect the adjacent tracks to prevent information from being recorded correctly.

Examples of approaches to preventing the information recording in an off-tracking condition includes a technology described in Published Unexamined Patent Application No. 11-126412. The technology described in that application, with the object of improving the performance of a rotating recording apparatus in an environment in which the apparatus undergoes a shock, in particular, achieving the timing control of an optimum retry operation start according to the affecting magnitude of shock force or vibration, reads and sets an optimum retry interval according to the magnitude of the shock or vibration from retry intervals stored in storage means to cause a data write operation to be retried with an optimum timing if the shock or vibration is detected to halt the write operation. In this way, the number of retries or wasteful latency could be reduced compared with the case where a fixed retry latency is determined, thereby improving the performance of the apparatus.

[Problems to be solved by the invention]

However, the technology described in that application and other prior-art technologies have the following problems. A gravitational acceleration sensor (G-sensor) is used to detect a shock and vibration. Physical quantity detected by the G-sensor is acceleration (force) and does not exactly reflect the off-tracking amount described above. The off-tracking amount is a displacement (position) from an intended track position at which a head is to be positioned. Although a shock or vibration (force) causes the displacement of the head and therefore off-tracking, an output from the G-sensor does not directly represent the off-tracking amount. Because a

position is typically represented by the double integral of force in a system in which a feedback is provided, such as the head positioning control system of a hard disc drive, an actual off-tracking amount is provided with time delay with respect to the output of the sensor. As a result, a problem arises if a pulse-like shock that is as short as the time delay is exerted, as described below. This problem will be described with reference to Figure 6.

Figure 6A shows a logic circuit diagram for explaining the problem that the inventors of the present invention considered. Figure 6B shows a diagrammatic drawing. As shown in Figure 6A, a shock out signal 101, which is output if an output from the G-sensor exceeds a predetermined threshold, is referenced when a write gate signal 102 is asserted (goes high). When both of the shock out signal 101 and the write gate signal 102 are high, the output of an AND circuit 103 goes high and is latched by a latch circuit 104 for a predetermined time period and a write inhibit signal is generated. The write inhibit signal is inverted by a NOT circuit 105 and input to an AND circuit 106 to mask the write gate signal 102 (force it low). This inhibits the write operation. In other words, the shock out signal 101 is referenced only when the write gate is open and the write inhibit signal is not generated when the write gate is closed (the write gate signal 102 is low).

This will be described in time sequence with reference to Figure 6B. Curve 110 is a waveform representing, with respect to the time-axis, an output from the G-sensor when a short pulse shock is exerted. The shock out signal 101 is continuously output in the output waveform of curve 110 while a threshold 111 is exceeded. However, unless the write gate signal 102 is asserted (high), no write inhibit signal is generated, as described above. Here, no problem would occur if the phase of the waveform 110 of the sensor output matches that of off-tracking amount at the position of the head. However, an actual off-tracking at the head position delays with respect to the sensor output waveform of curve 110 as shown by curve

113. If the write gate signal 102 is asserted (high) at time t2 immediately after the time (t1) at which the shock out signal 101 stops, no write inhibit signal would be generated and a write operation start because the shock out signal 101 is not high even though the head position is off-track.

The inventors of the present invention have found that the above-mentioned problem was likely to arise when the inventors tried to increase the storage density of a recording medium, typically a 2.5-inch size hard disk or smaller, in a hard disk drive installed in a portable computer susceptible to an external shock and vibration. For example, the above-mentioned problem is likely to occur when the storage density is increased to about 30 ktpi or over in a hard disk drive of 4,200 rpm.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a technology that can achieve high recording reliability of a rotating storage apparatus which uses a high-density storage medium, even in an environment where a shock or vibration exists.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a technology that can inhibit a write operation in an off-tracking condition even in an environment where a short pulse shock or high-frequency vibration is exerted.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a technology that allows for an optimum write inhibit operation according to the magnitude of a shock or the amplitude of vibration and a technology that can increase the writing speed as well as the reliability of the apparatus to improve the performance of the apparatus.

[Summary of the invention]

The outline of the present invention will be described below. The rotating storage apparatus of the present invention

comprises a rotating recording medium for recording information, a head for performing at least a write operation onto the rotating recording medium, and an acceleration sensor for detecting a shock, wherein: if an output from the acceleration sensor exceeds a predetermined threshold, the write operation is inhibited during a write inhibit period regardless of the status of a write gate signal. The apparatus further comprises a logic for charging the write inhibit period according to a time span in which the acceleration sensor exceeds the threshold or to the output peak value of the acceleration sensor.

The rotating storage apparatus of the present invention comprises a rotating recording medium for recording information, a head for performing at least a write operation onto the rotating recording medium, and an acceleration sensor for detecting a shock, wherein the apparatus comprises: means for monitoring an output from the acceleration sensor and, if the monitor output exceeds a predetermined threshold, outputting a shock out signal; latch means for outputting a latch signal at a first level during a write inhibit period from a time at which the shock out signal is input; write gate signal generation means for outputting the signal at the first level when a write permission is given; and a logic enabling a write onto the rotating recording medium when the latch signal is at a second level other than the first level and when the write gate signal is at the first level. The apparatus further comprises a logic for charging the write inhibit period according to a time span in which the acceleration sensor exceeds the threshold or to the output peak value of the acceleration sensor.

The information recording method of the present invention is a method for recording information in a rotating storage apparatus comprising a rotating recording medium for recording information, a head for performing at least a write operation onto the rotating recording medium, and an acceleration sensor for detecting a shock, the method comprising the steps of: outputting a shock out signal if an output from the acceleration sensor exceeds a predetermined threshold; outputting continuously a signal at a first level during a write inhibit period in response to the input of the shock out signal; generating a logical AND signal of a logical negation signal at a first level and a write gate signal output, the write gate signal becomes the first level when a write permission is given; and enabling a write onto the rotating recording medium when the logical AND signal is at the first level. The write inhibit period is varied according to a time span in which the acceleration sensor exceeds the threshold or to the output peak value of the acceleration sensor.

According to the above-described rotating storage apparatus or information recording method, a write inhibit signal is generated at the time when a shock out signal is detected, regardless of the status of the write gate. The write inhibit signal is referenced and if the apparatus is in the write inhibit state, a write gate signal is masked (negated, goes low). The period (write inhibit period) during which the write inhibit signal is continuously output after the shock out signal is detected is determined by taking the characteristics of the apparatus into account, and in addition, changed by referencing the width of the output signal or the peak value of the acceleration sensor.

This ensures that the write inhibit signal is generated to inhibit a write operation in an off-tracking condition whenever the head is in the off-tracking condition in an environment in which a short pulse-like shock or high-frequency vibration is exerted on the apparatus. Thus, the information recording reliability of the apparatus can be increased. In addition, the write time can be reduced by selecting an optimum write inhibit duration, thereby improving the performance of the apparatus.

[Preferred embodiment]

An embodiment of the present invention will be described below with reference to the accompanying drawings. However, the present invention may be implemented in many different embodiments and should not be construed as being limited to the description of the embodiment. Throughout the description of the embodiment, like elements are labeled with like numbers.

Figure 1 is a perspective view showing an example of a hard disk drive, which is one embodiment of the present invention. Figure 2 is a block diagram of the hard disk drive. The hard

disk drive of this embodiment comprises a disc-like magnetic recording medium 1 on which information is magnetically recorded, a spindle motor 2 for driving the magnetic recording medium 1, a magnetic head 3 for recording information on the magnetic recording medium 1 or reading from information recorded on the magnetic recording medium 1, an arm 4 for supporting the magnetic head 3, a voice coil motor 5 for driving the arm 4, and a hard disk controller 6 for controlling input and output of information into and from the magnetic head 3 and the drive of the spindle motor 2 and voice coil motor 5. Data writing and reading into and from the magnetic head 3 are performed through a flexible cable 8 attached to a connector 7 and the arm 4. A gravitational acceleration sensor 9 is attached to the flexible cable 8. While the gravitational acceleration sensor 9 is shown as attached to a movable part of the flexible cable 8 in Figure 1 for clarity, it is in practice attached to a cable connection part in the close proximity of the connector 7 so that vibration of the cable is not detected by the gravitational acceleration sensor 9.

The hard disk controller 6 interfaces to a host computer 10 and reads or writes information from or onto the magnetic recording medium 1 as magnetic information, according to a read or write request from the host computer 10.

Figure 3 is a circuit block diagram of part of the hard disk controller 6. Figure 4 shows a chart of the output timing from major parts of the circuit and the waveform of outputs from the gravitational acceleration sensor and the off-tracking amount of the head.

The circuit block shown in Figure 3 consists of a latch circuit 21 for latching a shock out signal SO, a NOT circuit 22 for negating the output from the latch circuit 21, and an AND circuit 23 to which the output from the NOT circuit 22 and a write gate signal WG are provided as its inputs.

Figure 4A is a chart showing the waveform of an output from the

gravitational acceleration sensor 9 in response to a shock exerted on the drive apparatus. It is assumed that waveform 30 as shown is output when a short pulse shock is exerted. An output (shock out signal SO) 33 as shown in Figure 4B is continuously output from the sensor during the time period in which the waveform 30 exceeds a predetermined threshold 31. The displacement (off-tracking amount) from a track position of the magnetic head 3 caused by this shock is indicated by curve 34 in Figure 4C. The off-tracking amount (curve 34) is a physical quantity having a distance dimension and represented by a double integral as mentioned earlier, and therefore has time delay with respect to the sensor output (waveform 30).

According to the present invention, a write inhibit signal 35 is generated as shown in Figure 4D in order to inhibit a write operation while such off-tracking exists. The write inhibit signal 35 is generated by the circuit block shown in Figure 3. That is, the shock out signal SO is generated by shock out generating means (not shown) and input into the latch circuit 21. The output of the latch circuit 21 is held high during a predetermined time period after time t_3 at which the shock out signal SO is detected (write inhibit period ($t_4 - t_3$)). The output signal from the latch circuit 21 is converted into low by the NOT circuit 22. In other words, during the write inhibit period, a low-level signal is input into the AND circuit 23 and the output from the AND signal 23 goes low regardless of the status of the write gate signal WG to keep the write inhibit state.

In this way, according to the present invention, a write operation is inhibited during a predetermined period (write inhibit period) after a shock out signal SO is detected, regardless of the status of the write gate WG. Thus, the write inhibit state can be kept to inhibit a write operation in an off-tracking condition even if a short pulse shock is exerted.

As shown in Figure 4E, the output 36 (final write gate output) from the AND circuit 23 does not continuously go high

(asserted) even if the write gate WG is asserted (goes high) at time t_5 during the write inhibit period, and goes high (asserted) at time t_6 by a retry after the end of the write inhibit period. The asserted state (high level) of the write gate signal 36 forces a write signal 37 onto the magnetic recording medium 1 to be output. Examples of the write signal 37 includes a synchronous signal, address signal, user data signal, and error correction code signal.

The write inhibit period ($t_4 - t_3$), that is, a latch period by the latch circuit 21, can be fixed in appropriate time periods by analyzing the variation characteristics of the arm 4 and other components beforehand by experiments and reflecting the results of the experiments in the determination. According to the study by the inventors of the present invention, it has been empirically found that a period equivalent to 15 servo sectors is appropriate. Because the sampling frequency for one servo sector is 5.6 kHz, about 2.7 msec may be appropriate.

The write inhibit period may be varied in consideration of an output value from the gravitational acceleration sensor 9. Figure 5 is a block diagram showing an example of a circuit for determining a change of write inhibit period. This circuit is contained in the hard disk controller 6, for example.

An output signal Sig from the gravitational acceleration sensor 9 is input into an amplifier (AMP) 40. The output of the AMP 40 is input into a window comparator 41 and an analog-digital converter (ADC) 42. The window comparator 41 outputs the high-level signal when a signal exceeding a predetermined threshold is input. The time span in which the output is held high is measured by a pulse width measurement circuit 43. The measured value is input into a micro processing unit (MPU) 44, where a write inhibit period is calculated according to the time span measured by the pulse width measurement circuit 43. A controller MPU installed in a hard disk controller 6 may also be used as the MPU 44.

On the other hand, a signal converted into a digital signal in the ADC 42 is input into the MPU 44 and the largest value (the peak value of the signal) is selected and a write inhibit period according to the peak value is calculated in the MPU 44.

The write inhibit period calculated in the MPU 44 can be input into the latch circuit 21 in Figure 3 and the write inhibit period is set as the latch period.

In this way, the write inhibit period can be varied according to the signal width or peak value of the gravitational acceleration sensor 9, thereby allowing an optimum write inhibit period to be set according to the output value of the gravitational acceleration sensor 9 by a program provided to the MPU 44. Of course, findings in experiments and studies can be reflected in the optimization of this program.

Any programs that take into account only the pulse width value, only the peak value, or both of the pulse width and peak value may be used for the calculation of the write inhibit period by the MPU 44.

While the present invention by the inventors has been described in particular with respect to the embodiment of the present invention, the present invention is not limited to the above-described embodiment. Various changes may be made to the present invention without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

For example, while the embodiment has been described with respect to the hard disk drive as an example of the rotating storage apparatus, the present invention is not limited to the hard disk drive. Instead, the present invention may be applied to any storage apparatus having a rotating recording medium, including a rewritable optical and magneto-optical recording apparatus such as CD-R/W, DVD, and MO drive storage apparatuses. In addition, the present invention may be applied to a removable rotating magnetic recording apparatus such as a

ZIP apparatus and floppy disk drive.

While no specific examples of the gravitational acceleration sensor 9 have been presented, any acceleration sensors, including a dielectric sensor such as a gyro-meter, and a semiconductor sensor may be used as the acceleration sensor 9.

In addition, while the example in which the time span and peak value of the sensor output are referenced to vary the write inhibit period has been described, the sensor output waveform may be analyzed by using an appropriate method such as fast-Fourier-transform processing and the result of the analysis may be used to calculate the write inhibit period more precisely.

[Advantages of the invention]

The advantages provided by the major elements of the present invention disclosed herein are as follows.

High recording reliability of a rotating storage medium apparatus using a high-density recording medium can be achieved even in an environment where a shock or vibration exists.

A write operation in an off-tracking condition can be inhibited even in an environment where a short pulse shock or high-frequency vibration may be exerted.

An optimum write inhibit operation can be performed according to the magnitude of a shock or the amplitude of vibration, thus improving the writing speed and performance as well as the reliability of the apparatus.

3. Brief Description of the Drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of an example of a hard disk

drive of an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a block diagram showing an example of the hard disk drive of the embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a circuit block diagram showing part of a hard disk controller;

Figure 4 is a chart showing the timing of outputs from major parts of the circuit, the waveform of outputs of an acceleration sensor, an off-tracking amount;

Figure 5 is a block diagram showing a circuit for determining a change of write inhibit period; and

Figure 6A is a logic circuit diagram and Figure 6B is a chart for explaining a problem considered by the inventors of the present invention.

[Description of symbols]

- 1 ... Magnetic recording medium
- 2 ... Spindle motor
- 3 ... Magnetic head
- 4 ... Arm
- 5 ... Voice coil motor
- 6 ... Hard disk controller
- 7 ... Connector
- 8 ... Flexible cable
- 9 ... Gravitational acceleration sensor
- 10 ... Host computer
- 21 ... Latch circuit
- 22 ... NOT circuit
- 23 ... AND circuit
- 30 ... Waveform
- 31 ... Threshold
- 34 ... Curve
- 35 ... Write inhibit signal

36 ... Write gate signal
37 ... Write signal
40 ... Amplifier (AMP)
41 ... Window comparator
42 ... Analog-digital converter (ADC)
43 ... Pulse width measurement circuit
44 ... Micro processing unit (MPU)
101 ... Shock out signal
102 ... Write gate signal
103 ... AND circuit
104 ... Latch circuit
105 ... NOT circuit
106 ... AND circuit
110 ... Curve
110 ... Waveform
111 ... Threshold
113 ... Curve
SO ... Shock out signal
Sig ... Output signal
WG ... Write gate signal

Claims:

1. A rotating storage apparatus comprising:
 - a rotating recording medium for recording information;
 - a head for performing at least a write operation onto said rotating recording medium;
 - an acceleration sensor for detecting a shock,
 - a logic for inhibiting said write operation during a write inhibit period regardless of the status of a write gate signal upon an output from said acceleration sensor exceeding a predetermined threshold; and
 - a logic for changing said write inhibit period according to a time span in which said acceleration sensor exceeds said threshold or to the output peak value of said acceleration sensor.

2. A rotating storage apparatus comprising:
 - a rotating recording medium for recording information;
 - a head for performing at least a write operation onto said rotating recording medium;
 - an acceleration sensor for detecting a shock;
 - means for monitoring an output from said acceleration sensor and, if said monitor output exceeds a predetermined threshold, outputting a shock out signal;
 - a latch means for outputting a latch signal at a first level during a write inhibit period from a time at which said shock out signal is input;
 - a write gate signal generation means for outputting the signal at the first level when a write permission is given;
 - a logic enabling a write onto said rotating recording medium when said latch signal is at a second level other than said first level and when said write gate signal is at the first level; and
 - a logic for changing said write inhibit period according to a time span in which said acceleration sensor exceeds said threshold or to the output peak value of said acceleration sensor.

3. The rotating storage apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said rotating storage apparatus is a hard disk drive.

4. An information recording method in a rotating storage apparatus comprising a rotating recording medium for recording information, a head for performing at least a write operation onto said rotating recording medium, and an acceleration sensor for detecting a shock, said method comprising the steps of:

outputting a shock out signal if an output from said acceleration sensor exceeds a predetermined threshold;

outputting continuously a signal at a first level during a write inhibit period in response to the input of said shock out signal;

generating a logical AND signal of a logical negation signal at a first level and a write gate signal output, said write gate signal becomes the first level when a write permission is given; and

enabling a write onto said rotating recording medium when said logical AND signal is at the first level,

wherein said write inhibit period is varied according to a time span in which said acceleration sensor exceeds said threshold or to the output peak value of said acceleration sensor.

5. The information recording method according to claim 4, wherein said rotating storage apparatus is a hard disk drive.