Apple IIe: Printing to Networked Printers

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TOPIC ---

I have an Apple IIe network problem. I have a printer network only with no
file server. The school district wants to use the printer network with its
5.25-inch disk drives. There are about 50 labs with 20 to 25 Apple IIe systems
in each lab.

I created a Chooser and Menu program "startup disk". I copied the necessary
files and ATINIT to let the startup disk auto-select the networked printers.
We found a public-domain menu program that requires only 1.5K. This lets the
Chooser be part of the menu and lets teachers and students (especially K-3)
select program without using pathnames.

I understand the AppleTalk network process and the need for the 3.5-inch
drive. However, why can't we also provide support for the Apple IIe and the
5.25-inch drives?

DISCUSSION --

The only issue with using 5.25-inch drives for the described environment
concerns disk space. After adding ProDOS 8, Chooser.II (with associated
files), and ATINIT, the remaining space is all that is available for
applications and data files on the startup disk. This means that there is
approximately only 60K available for applications on a disk configured with the
needed resources for network printing.

For a printer choice to be retained, you need run Chooser.II only once, as long
as the selected printer maintains the same name and stays available on the
network. The selected printer is stored in the ATINIT file of the disk that
contains Chooser.II. On subsequent startups with that disk, the printer that
was previously selected becomes the default printer. Thus, Chooser.II is not
required to be run every session.

If only one 5.25-inch drive is available and if applications and/or data files
larger than 60K are to be used, it is possible to start up with the disk
described above, then switch (without restarting) to a second disk containing
the larger application or data file. We do not know of any menu programs that
can launch an application on a second disk, although such a program would not
difficult for an Apple II programmer to write.

However, since Chooser.II needs to run only once (unless something about the
printer changes), alternate methods of launching an application from the second
disk can be considered. One example would be an Applesoft program that launched
the menu program. By giving the Applesoft program a simple name (like MENU)
and placing it in the main directory, the students would be able to switch
disks, type RUN MENU, and then select the application desired.
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