Improving Server Performance

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TOPIC ---

Which makes more sense to increase network performance when getting files from the hard drive of a file server?

- Upgrade the server to a faster CPU? (e.g. from a Macintosh II to IIfx)

- Add SCSI Cards to speed up performance of the disk drive?

DISCUSSION ---

It depends on what part of the system is currently the bottleneck and how much you want to spend. Since the target is the CPU and I/O, we assume you're already using EtherTalk and not LocalTalk. This is the most obvious first step to improve performance.

The next step depends on what the most important application is on the server. Upgrading the CPU from a Macintosh II to a Macintosh IIfx can help a number of server operations a little, but it won't make dramatic differences. If a high percentage of the server's time is spent waiting for the disk drive to complete seek operations (such as with multi-user database applications), then speeding up this waiting won't do much good, and you should consider a higher performance disk drive. This may consist of a disk drive with faster seeks and throughput, but could also be a caching SCSI card such as the DayStar SCSI PowerCard with several megabytes of cache RAM. Each contributes unique advantages.

A combination of all of these upgrades would give the highest performance improvement. Since we haven't performed any benchmarks on this subject, we can't provide you with real numbers for comparison. Our recommendation is to obtain a caching SCSI card for evaluation and decide if it provides the necessary performance improvements.
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