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AIR: Configuring AppleTalk Port, Device Hiding (2/93)

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TOPIC -----

This article describes setting up the Apple Internet Router, and LAN support in configuring an AppleTalk port and Device Hiding.

DISCUSSION -----

The Untitled default document, which you see when you first launch the router's Admin application, displays icons representing the available physical ports.

Double-clicking one of the physical ports or clicking the arrow next to it expands the port to display the available access methods or sub-ports. (A sub-port would be, for example, a card that supports more than one physical port.)

Apple Internet Router supports three "families" of access methods: AppleTalk, half-routing, and tunneling. Each family may include more than one specific access method. For example, LocalTalk, EtherTalk, and TokenTalk are all AppleTalk access methods. In addition to AppleTalk, the serial ports also support half-routing (DialUp), while Ethernet and Token Ring ports also support tunneling (IP Tunnel). Double-clicking an access method brings up the corresponding Port Info window, containing information specific to that access method.

Configuring an AppleTalk Port -----

Configuring an AppleTalk port is fairly straightforward. First, determine whether the port is to be a seed or nonseed port. A seed port is one that determines and propagates the network number range and zone list for the physical network it is attached to (or, in the case of a LocalTalk network, the network number and zone name). A nonseed port obtains network number and zone information from a seed router on the same network.

Each AppleTalk network on an internet must have at least one seed router attached to it. It is permissible, even desirable in many cases, to have more than one seed router attached to a network, but they must all agree about that network's number range and zone list.

If the port is a nonseed port, then the only configuration option is to define hidden devices, if any. If the port is a seed port, then the administrator specifies the network number range and zone list. You can use "Get Zones..." to select zone names from the Macintosh's current AppleTalk connection. The administrator must take care that the network number and zone specifications agree with any other seed routers on the same network.

Device Hiding

One of the more interesting features of Apple Internet Router is device hiding, which lets you select any device or devices on your local network to be hidden from users on other networks. Device hiding is configured in the "Hide Devices..." dialog, which is accessed by clicking the "Hide..." button in the Port Info window.

You can elect to hide no devices, all devices, only a specific list of devices, or all devices except a specific list. You can hide your selection from all other ports or from a specific other port.

The administrator must use good judgment when setting up the list of hidden devices (or the list of not hidden devices). If the list contains more than a few devices, it will adversely affect performance.

In order for device hiding to be effective in a loop environment, all routers on a given network must hide the same devices. Otherwise, a "hidden" device would be accessible through another router that isn't hiding it.

Device hiding is not foolproof. Users could obtain a hidden device's AppleTalk address through some means other than looking for it on their network, such as running Inter•Poll on a portion of the internet that does have access to the device. Armed with that information, a user could access the device programmatically, even though the device is theoretically hidden.

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