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LocalTalk PC Troubleshooting

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TOPIC -----

This article describes troubleshooting for the Apple LocalTalk PC card and AppleShare PC software.

DISCUSSION -----

The LocalTalk PC Card and the AppleShare PC software were sold to Farallon and are marketed under the name PhoneNet PC. Please refer to Farallon for support on the PhoneNet PC product line.

In its most basic configuration, the PC LocalTalk Card can only print to a LaserWriter over an AppleTalk network with the software included with the card.

To make the PC become a client on AppleShare, print to a LaserWriter as a native MS-DOS-type printer (directly address LPT1: / LPT2: and so on), and have access to other AppleTalk services, you must have AppleShare PC software on the PC, too.

When printing to the LaserWriter just from the utility software that comes with the card, and not from AppleShare PC, the file to be printed must be stored to a disk first (either floppy or hard disk). Most of the more powerful MS-DOS word processors provide PostScript output, but -- because of the limitations of the software provided with the LocalTalk PC Card -- not directly to the LaserWriter.

Again, the PostScript information generated by the word-processing program must be stored on disk as an intermediate step. Before the PostScript file can be sent to the printer, a PostScript initialization file must be sent to the printer first. It is possible that each PC application that outputs PostScript may need a different initialization file.

The PostScript initialization file that comes with Microsoft Word 4.0 is called POSTSCR.P. The tool that you send the file to the printer with is called LWPRINT.EXE and comes with the basic PC LocalTalk option card. As per the instructions in the LocalTalk PC card manual (pages 74, 75), to send the PostScript initialization file to the LaserWriter, type in the following at the DOS prompt: LWPRINT -A POSTSCR.P and press <Enter>.

At this time, if all is well, you will be returned to the DOS prompt with no error messages. You can then call up the LaserWriter.EXE program and follow the instructions in the PC LocalTalk manual to print out your PostScript output. The initialization file needs to be sent to the printer only when the printer is first being used by the PC, if the printer has been reinitialized by another machine (like a Macintosh), or if the power to the printer has been interrupted.

However, due to operational environments of MS-DOS, you may run into problems. For example, if all PC LocalTalk utilities are in one subdirectory on the user's hard disk and that subdirectory is in the PATH command's search path, you can access LWPRINT and LaserWriter from anywhere in the DOS directory structure.

If the <file name> specified as an argument for the LocalTalk Utilities -- that is, - LWPRINT -A <filename> -- is not in the current directory, you will get a message saying "CAN'T OPEN PRINT FILE <filename>". If this happens, no printer initialization will take place and any subsequent tries to send PostScript files to the printer via the LaserWriter.EXE program will result in printer error messages. Just make sure that the files concerned (utility programs, printer initialization files, and data files) are really where you specify them to be.

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