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TokenTalk: Sniffer MisReads AARP

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TOPIC -----

Why does Sniffer see AppleTalk as a standard IBM Token Ring hardware and then as an Ethernet type=80F3? During the time I ran my tests, one of my PC LAN servers crashed in a big way, and I wonder if the TokenTalk card and software might have contributed to its demise.

DISCUSSION -----

The Sniffer is displaying the AppleTalk Address Resolution Protocol (AARP). AARP performs three basic functions:

- It initially determines the unique protocol address of an AppleTalk node for a given protocol set (like the AppleTalk protocols).
- It maps between two address sets.
- It filters packets within a given protocol set.

In AppleTalk Phase 2, AARP packets are encapsulated in IEEE 802.2 format on data links that support this standard. To accommodate the large number of protocols, IEEE developed the SubNetwork Address Protocol (SNAP) standard. The SNAP allows multiple protocols to be used in one data link. It defines a 5-byte field to identify the protocol that is using the data link. It ensures that protocol identifiers from different vendors do not conflict. The SNAP protocol discriminator for AARP packets is \$00000080F3; the Sniffer mistakenly reported this as Ethernet.

Nevertheless, these packets should not cause the LAN server to crash. We connected a Sniffer to a Token Ring LAN in our office and also saw these SNAP packets reported incorrectly, but the server and the network are operating normally.

We strongly suggest that you upgrade to the latest version of software. You must use the new 1.1.2 version of Apple File Exchange with SMB and TokenTalk 2.0 final.

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