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MacX25 Version 1.0.1: Description

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TOPIC -----

This article describes version 1.0.1 of MacX25 software, and gives some background information about communication software.

DISCUSSION -----

MacX25 Version 1.0.1

MacX25 version 1.0.1 is updated software for linking Macintosh computers to packet-switched data networks (PSDN) supporting the international OSI and CCITT X.25 recommendation for enterprise-wide communication.

It is now available for Macintosh computers running System 6 or System 7, supporting any Macintosh as an X.25 client and all Macintosh II computers as servers. System 7 offers a range of services for networking, including file sharing and interapplication communication. To ease transition to using X.25 in the newer system software environment, MacX25 version 1.0.1 retains the same set-up configuration and does not alter the interface used in MacX25 version 1.0. Access to host computers and end-user services on the PSDN is distributed from a MacX25 server to Macintosh computers over the AppleTalk network system.

For improved communication with European networks, MacPAD (the client side of MacX25) now supports 8-bit characters. Support for 8-bit characters, in which such symbols as the German *ä*, French *ç*, and Spanish *ñ* are encoded, enables businesses on both sides of the Atlantic to transfer data files transparently and communicate in the appropriate European languages.

The new MacPAD also offers new features for flexibility in communicating across the X.25 network, including the ability to negotiate throughput parameters and the size of packet windows. In addition, because it is implemented as a connection tool for the Communications Toolbox, MacPAD allows third-party applications, including terminal emulators, to connect to host systems over X.25 networks.

The MacX25 Programming Library, available separately for third-party

developers, works in conjunction with the MacX25 server to provide X.25 access to applications. This enables developers to create Macintosh solutions giving users access to PSDNs. The library, which remains unchanged in the new version of MacX25, consists of a toolkit for such routines as initiating and terminating contact with the MacX25 server, establishing and closing down a virtual circuit, and passing data across an established circuit.

For example, an application developed in Italy uses tools in the MacX25 Programming Library to provide Macintosh-to-host access across an X.25 network. List SpA, headquartered in Pisa, developed a cost-effective interbank trading network for the Italian banking system that enables Macintosh computers in each bank to connect to the system's mainframe over the X.25 network.

The MacX25 version 1.0.1 Server kit also includes the MacPAD client software and updated documentation. A MacX25 version 1.0.1 upgrade is available for owners of MacX25 version 1.0. A Macintosh running the MacX25 version 1.0.1 server software requires an Apple Serial NB Card. The MacX25 Programming Library, used by developers of third-party X.25 applications for the Macintosh, remains unchanged.

MacX25 1.0.1 is available in the United States through APDA. Outside the U.S., MacX25 version 1.0.1 is available to developers through APDA and to end-users through Apple dealers. Search on "APDA and 800" to find the 800 numbers for contacting APDA.

The international version of MacX25 version 1.0.1, which will allow the English language version of MacX25 to run on foreign-manufactured Macintosh systems, will be available in Europe.

Background

Apple's MacX25 conforms to the Open Systems Interconnect (OSI) model and Consultative Committee on International Telephone and Telegraph's (CCITT) X.25 recommendation for communication with packet-switched data networks (PSDN). Because of their cost-effective use of leased lines to transmit information over long distances, X.25 PSDNs offer an increasingly popular means for electronic communication internationally.

MacX25 consists of server and client software. The MacX25 server software allows a Macintosh on an AppleTalk network to be set up as a single entry point to the PSDN. Server-based access reduces the cost of global connectivity by maximizing use of expensive resources, such as leased lines. MacPAD client software works in conjunction with the server software to provide packet assembler/disassembler connectivity to the PSDN.

MacX25 features a graphics-based administrator's application that facilitates configuration and administration of the server. An address service allows administrators to set addressing details on the Macintosh server.

Running the server component of MacX25 1.0.1 under System 7 requires 4MB of RAM; the client side needs 2MB. To run MacX25 1.0.1 server software with System 6.0.7 requires 2MB of RAM; the client side needs 1MB.

MacX25 supports the following standards and recommendations:

- CCITT X.25 1980 and 1984 versions
 - Packet Assembler/Disassembler (CCITT X.3, X.28 and X.29)
- Copyright 1991 Apple Computer, Inc.

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