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Macintosh: Connecting to a DEC VAX (2/95)

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TOPIC -----

Is it possible to connect a Macintosh to a DEC VAX computer?

DISCUSSION -----

You can connect your Macintosh to a VAX computer from DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation), either directly or via a modem, and use a terminal emulator with the VT100 tool to access the VAX. Below are the pinouts for the cable you'll need to make if you decide to connect directly.

Mini DIN-8 to RS-232

The Macintosh Mini DIN-8 port pins have the following correspondent functions required to use them for RS-232:

DIN-8 Pin#	Function	RS-232	Pin#
1	HSKo (Handshake input)	DTR	20
2	HSKi (Handshake output)	DCD	8
3	TxD- (Transmit data, negative going component)	TXD	3
4	GND (Chassis/Signal ground)	GND	7
5	RxD- (Receive data, negative going component)	RXD	2
6	TxD+ (Transmit data, positive going component)	GND	7
7	GPI (General-Purpose input)	NC	
8	RxD+ (Receive data, positive going component)	GND	7

DB-9 to DB-25

Macintosh signal (in/out)	Macintosh DB-9	VAX DTE DB-25	VAX DCE DB-25	VAX signal (in/out)
Gnd Chassis ground	*1	1		Gnd Chassis ground
Rx+ Receive data, positive going component	*8			
Gnd Signal ground	3	7		Gnd Signal ground
Tx- (in) Transmit data,	5	2		Tx (out) Transmit data

negative going component				
+12V	+12-Volt line	6	20	DTR (in) Data Terminal Ready
HSK (in)	Handshake	7	6	DSR (out) Data Set Ready
Rx-	(out) Receive data,	9	3	RxD (in) Receive data
negative going component				
		2		no connection
		4		no connection

* NOTE: There are many variations on connecting pins 1, 3 and 8, but the basic intent is to bring all three of those pins to ground on the Macintosh side. Connect Signal Ground to Chassis Ground if you want a slightly better noise margin.

If this configuration doesn't work, try these additional cable connections:

+12V	+12-Volt line	6	4	RTS (in) Request to Send
HSK (in)	Handshake	7	8	DCD (out) Data Carrier Detect
HSK (in)	Handshake	7	5	CTS (out) Clear to Send

Article Change History:

02 Feb 1995 - Added Mini Din-8 to DB-25 pinouts.

18 Oct 1994 - Reviewed for technical accuracy, revised formatting.

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