Macintosh-to-Sun/UNIX File Transfer

This article last reviewed: 9 October 1990

TOPIC --

We have a high-end Crossfield Studio color scanner/separation system that I
am expanding to provide for a Macintosh front-end. We recommended a
Macintosh IIfx with an Ethernet NuBus card and K-AShare file server software
to communicate with a Sun SPARCstation (K-AShare is AFP-compatible file
server software for UNIX hosts and is sold by Mt. Xinu.)

The reason for the Sun is that the RIP software (StudioLink 2.0) runs only
in a UNIX environment. The purpose of the RIP software is to translate the
PostScript files from the Macintosh into a native bitmap file that the
Crossfield Studio system can understand.

The proposed functionality of the Macintosh-to-Sun link is to provide file
transfer to and from the Sun. Once a file is transferred to the Sun, it's
archived on a hard disk for eventual processing by the Crossfield system.
The Crossfield system is configured around a PDP mini-computer running RSX
11M Version 4.2 operating system. For tying the Sun and PDP systems
together, both Digital and Crossfield recommended using DECnet over
Ethernet.

Should we have DECnet connecting the Macintosh to the Sun? Is the use of
K-AShare an appropriate choice, or is there a better way to connect a
Macintosh to a UNIX machine for file transfer capability?

DISCUSSION ---

You should be able to do file transfer between the Macintosh and the Sun using
either TCP/IP, DECnet, or the K-Ashare product.

The native networking protocol on the Sun platform is TCP/IP, so you can run
MacTCP to communicate between the Macintosh and the Sun.

There are products like TSSnet that allow DECnet on the Macintosh. Sun does
provide DECnet on their machines, but we believe you have to pay extra for it.

There should be no compatibility problems for the Sun running all these
protocols, because they can share the same Ethernet.

More importantly, there are two things you should take into consideration:

1) Select the product that provides the easiest way for the Macintosh users to
   transfer files to the Sun. With an AFP-compatible file server, the
   Macintosh users can just drag the file to the server icon. Using TCP/IP or
   DECnet, they would need to learn FTP or DECnet COPY, which are not too
   complicated, but less Macintosh-like.

2) Once the file is transferred to the Sun, can the StudioLink/Crossfield
   system process the file without any problems?   Remember a Macintosh file
   has a resource fork and a data fork. A minicomputer-based AFP-compatible
   server stores these as two separate files. Some tests should be done to
   ensure that the data fork portion file can be processed by the
   StudioLink/Crossfield system. Also, test to ensure that, if the file
   needs to be accessed by the Macintosh users afterwards, this can be done.

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Keywords: <None>

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19960215 11:05:19.00

Tech Info Library Article Number: 6200