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Macintosh: Wang VS Connectivity Issues

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This article discusses problems with connecting Macintoshes to Wang VS processors. The client is currently doing terminal emulation and file transfer on local and remote Wang VS processors. After some experimentation, they have attached a NetSerial modem to their AppleTalk network (using LocalTalk) with a customized version of VS Term. They are connected to the Wang VS through a WACS controller and use the RS-232 cable (19.2 bps) to attach to the NetSerial.

This solution is too slow for them, particularly when doing file transfers. The slowness in the network is due not to LocalTalk (LocalTalk transmissions are 230.4K bits-per-second), but to the RS-232 connection running at 19.2K bits-per-second. This means the RS-232 segment of your connection to the Wang is running 12 times slower than the LocalTalk.

There might be a way to connect Macintoshes to the Wang via Ethernet, but there are some prerequisites. NCSA Telnet from the University of Illinois' National Center for Supercomputer Applications, or NetOne from Ungermann-Bass, must be used on the Macintosh to make a VT100-emulation connection through TCP/IP and FTP communications. These packages are compatible with LocalTalk or EtherTalk for the Macintosh.

Connecting the Macintoshes to the Wang Ethernet is fairly straightforward using Kinetics FastPaths, Cayman GatorBoxes, Apple EtherTalk cards, or any of the various Macintosh Ethernet connectivity units from Kinetics.

The difficulties are with the Wang system, itself. The following questions must be resolved before the above solution can be implemented:

- 1) Does the Wang VS system use TCP/IP and FTP? If it uses WangNet, then these communication protocols will not work.
- 2) Can terminals be connected through the Ethernet? Some office systems may implement Ethernet for file transfers only and have no facilities for handling remote terminal connections across the Ethernet.

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