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PowerBook: Printing to Serial Printer w/One Serial Port (9/95)

Article Created: 19 August 1994

Article Reviewed/Updated: 6 September 1995

TOPIC -----

We have a number of customers who have bought PowerBook 500 series computers with a StyleWriter II. The problem is the printers will stop printing, usually with an error message "Port is Busy", even though AppleTalk is turned off. Can you advise if there is a problem in printing to the StyleWriter II from a PowerBook 500 computer.

If a problem exists, is there a work around?

DISCUSSION -----

The PowerBook 520(c) and 540(c) computers employ a single serial port which is a combination Printer/Modem port. In order to use this port for serial printing, use the following information to properly configure your PowerBook 500 series computer:

If the Express Modem is installed:

- Open the Express Modem control panel and select Use External Modem.
- Open the PowerBook Setup control panel and select Normal.

Open the Chooser and do the following:

- If using the PowerBook 200 series, turn OFF AppleTalk.
Because the PowerBook 500 series is equipped with Ethernet, you only have to disable AppleTalk if you are using the serial port for network services. You can verify that you are using Ethernet by making sure the Network Control Panel is set for Ethernet.
- Select the serial printer driver.
- Select the "printer/modem" icon (or the modem icon if the printer/modem icon is not available).

Note: Domestic PowerBook 500 series computers will have a Global Village Powerport Mercury modem installed, not an Express modem, and therefore will only need to have the PowerBook Setup control panel set to normal for step #1.

A similar problem can also occur when using the Color StyleWriter 2400 or other serial printer. If you see no port selection choices, make sure the PowerBook Setup control panel is set for Normal.

When using other serial printers on the PowerBook with the Assistant Toolbox installed, it is possible to have other difficulties printing. Apple engineering is aware of these problems and is working towards a solution. Workarounds are described in other articles in the Tech Info Library. Use PowerBook and Assistant Toolbox as search criteria.

Looking beyond for a longer term solution to this problem, any future Apple serial printer drivers will provide only one port selection (called the "Printer/Modem") in the Chooser. Also, the instructions outlined above are being included in the Read Me file for System 7.5.

This problem can also occur when printing to any serial printer with other PowerBook computers that have a single serial port including the PowerBook 150 and the PowerBook 200 series.

Article Change History:

- 06 Sep 1995 - Clarified when you have to turn off AppleTalk.
- 14 Mar 1995 - Clarified Discussion section, added Color StyleWriter 2400.
- 06 Feb 1995 - Changed PowerBook 145 to PowerBook 150.

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Keywords: kpbook

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19960215 11:05:19.00

Tech Info Library Article Number: 16067