HyperCard and Excessive Disk Access

This article last reviewed: 29 June 1988

Some users have reported seemingly continuous disk activity when running
large HyperCard stacks (in one case, 13000 cards amounting to 3.8M of disk
space). Disconnecting from a network made no difference.

The probable reason for continuous access is a HyperTalk statement that
adds or changes information in a field on a card. Any of three commands
(particularly when paired with a large number of cards) can contribute to
excessive disk access:

- the time
- the long time
- on idle

Putting "the time" into a field changes the field and thereby initiates
drive access -- once every minute.

Putting "the long time" into a field causes access once every second!
HyperCard performance may suffer from such continual disk I/O process.

Also, an "on idle" routine in a stack script or a card script of the current
card initiates disk I/O, because it adds or updates information within the
stack.

Slow down with large stacks also occurs when HyperCard preloads card index
pages during idle time. With many cards, there are many card index pages.
The first pages are unloaded when the latter ones are loaded. Therefore,
HyperCard keeps loading them, which results in the disk activity.
HyperCard 1.2 seems to correct the problem.

To summarize: where appropriate, change from "the long time" to "the time"
and review the use of "on idle" routines. Also check for any XCMDs and
XFCNs that may be initiating disk activity.
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Keywords: <None>

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19960215 11:05:19.00

Tech Info Library Article Number: 3085