MacX: High Level X Display Server Description (1/95)

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TOPIC --

This article provides a high level X display server description.

DISCUSSION ---

MacX is an X display server for the Macintosh Operating System. MacX 1.2 complies with the X Window System, Version 11, Release 4. It also supports failure of individual client requests (as opposed to the whole server) and the inclusion of DECW$CURSOR and DECW$SESSION fonts.

MacX lets multiple X11-compliant clients share the Macintosh display. Unlike other X display servers, MacX has many built-in functionality with the X display server. These function include:

• X window manager with Macintosh Finder-like appearance
• Font manager
• Color namer
• Remote command

The font manager handles the cataloging of X (Adobe's Bitmap Distribution Format – BDF), DECwindows and Macintosh fonts. BDF fonts, the format used by the X Consortium to distribute fonts, needs to be complied before they can be used by MacX. The font manager has a built-in font complier.

Also, the font manager lets you assign alias names to fonts. This particularly useful with the X fonts, because the X font naming convention is quite lengthy. This allows for a convenient means for referencing fonts.

The color namer lets you assign a name to a color selected via the standard color wheel dialog box (the same one from Control Panel). This alleviates the need for a user to define a color with RGB values. It also uses an easy-to-remember name to reference a particular color.

From MacX, remote commands can be sent to hosts on the network. Remote commands issued from MacX can be saved to a document and used again at a later time. A host informational status window is provided to find out status about commands requested via MacX.

In addition, MacX has two operating modes, rooted or rootless. Each mode has a
color and monochrome support. While in the rooted mode, another X window manager
can be requested to manage client windows attached to these rooted windows.
These rooted windows can be defined to be up to 2048 by 2048 pixels in size. In
the rootless mode, the client windows have a Macintosh Finder "look and feel"
like a Macintosh title bar with a close (kill client) box. The client windows
appear to be like any other window on the desktop.

Because the Macintosh has only a single button mouse, the three-button mouse,
which is very popular in the X world, is mapped to the arrow keys on the
keyboard. Arrow keys perform the arrow function and option-arrow perform a
three-button mouse operation or visa versa.

MacX connects to the network via the Macintosh Communications Toolbox. MacX
supports TCP/IP, ADSP and TSSNet (DECnet) tools.

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