AppleShare: Why is there Activity When Opening Local Folders?

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TOPIC ---

Some users have noticed that when you open the Macintosh System Folder on the
startup disk, the AppleShare network traffic arrows flash (sometimes causing a
very long delay in opening the System Folder). This, of course, does not happen
when AppleShare volumes are not mounted. Why does this happen?

DISCUSSION ---

When any folder is opened, the Finder checks the Creator of every file in
that folder and looks in the Desktop file of the current volume to see if
it can find a match. If there is no entry for that Creator type on the
current volume, it continues to look through the Desktop file of each
mounted volume until it finds an entry with a match to that Creator or
until there are no more volumes.

Any file that appears in the Finder with the type of "document" when the
folder is viewed by name or by date causes this to happen. This is because
the Finder makes "document" the type, only if it doesn't have an entry for
that Creator type in the Desktop file.

It is very common for applications to put files containing option settings
in the System Folder. MacWrite and Microsoft Word both do this. MacWrite
puts an unknown Creator type for that document. It, therefore, appears
as "document" type. If you have any servers mounted whenever the System
Folder is opened, selected, or redrawn, the servers are checked for an
entry in the Desktop file matching the Creator type of the file.

Another case would be if you used an application on a server and created a
document that you saved on your local disk. Whenever the folder containing
that document is opened, the Finder searches the mounted volumes for the
Creator of that document, because the local disk does not have an entry in
the Desktop file to match it. Microsoft Word creates an options file,
which is put into your System Folder, with the Creator type of Microsoft
Word. It, therefore, shows up as a Microsoft Word file. If, however, you
don't have Microsoft Word on your local disk because you used an
application from the server, when you open the System Folder again, the
mounted servers are searched.

Once an application is copied to a volume, the Creator type of that application is saved in the Desktop file of that volume. Even if that application is removed from the volume, there is still an entry in the Desktop file of that volume for that application's Creator type. When the Desktop file is rebuilt, the old Desktop file is thrown away, and a new one is created. Immediately after the Desktop is rebuilt, the Desktop file will contain entries for every application on that volume.

A file that was created by an application that is no longer on the volume may not cause the Finder to search the desktops of other volumes for a Creator type, if there is still an entry in the Desktop file of that volume. For example, if you have Microsoft Word on your local disk, create a document, and later throw Microsoft Word away, the Desktop still will have an entry for Microsoft Word. The Finder will not search the desktops of other volumes. If the Desktop is rebuilt, the local Desktop no longer will contain an entry for Microsoft Word, and the Finder, therefore, will search the desktop of any mounted volumes.

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