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Network Assistant: Workstation Status Unavailable (8/96)

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TOPIC -----

I have a computer lab administered by the Apple Network Assistant Toolkit (ANAT). At times, Network Assistant will report a workstation's status as "unavailable." When I check the workstation, the screen saver is activated. Is there any relationship? Under what conditions can a workstation become unavailable?

DISCUSSION -----

Every 30 seconds, the Macintosh running the Network Assistant application will poll the network to verify the availability of workstations configured under Network Assistant. Any workstations that fail to answer this "are you there" request will be marked unavailable. As the request is continually delivered, correcting for the workstation's inability to respond will automatically make it available again after a subsequent status request is answered.

Typically, failure to answer these status requests can be attributed to common network connectivity issues: a break in the cabling or connections, a frozen or powered-down CPU, a bad network card or transceiver, and so forth.

As in the case of your screen saver, it is possible (though uncommon) that an application may delay, prohibit, or otherwise interfere with other background processes, such as the process that allows the workstation to respond to this status request. Some applications preempt these background processes in order to allow the application to perform optimally for the user, though in such cases they will USUALLY provide user-definable options to "allow background processes" or "monitor system activity," and the like. Check with the manufacturer of your software to confirm this possibility. Finally, it could certainly also be the case that your screen saver allows background processes, but is simply in outright conflict with the system or network software.

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