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System 7.5: How Apple Menu Options Affects Performance (9/95)

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TOPIC -----

My system seems to have a delay or pause of a few seconds doing many simple things. For example, when an open file/save as dialog box appears on the screen it is often a few seconds before you can click OK, or Save or whatever. Creating, deleting or moving files and folders also seems to have a delay associated with the operation.

This problem arose after I placed an alias to the hard drive in the Apple Menu Items folder. Simply removing the alias from the Apple Menu Items folder brings back instant response.

DISCUSSION -----

Apple Menu Options (AMO) can slow your system operations when an alias to a hard drive is placed in the Apple Menu Items folder. Placing an alias to a top level folder (with many subfolders and files) in the Apple Menu Items folder can produce a similar slowdown, but more limited impact. Placing many folder aliases or actual folders in the Apple Menu Items folder can also lead to a slowdown, depending on their depth and contents.

There are different methods used in creating a hierarchical Apple Menu.

One method is to acquire the folder information and build the hierarchical menu when you select the folder through the Apple Menu. This makes the menus less responsive, particularly if the path leads off to a mounted server volume. You will see the AppleTalk arrows flash in the upper left corner of your screen as you navigate the hierarchical Apple Menu for a server volume. This is the approach used by NOW menus, MenuExtend from AlSoft, and the shareware extension BeHierarchic, and others.

The approach used by AMO is to pre-build all the hierarchical menus through five folder layers for every folder and folder aliases in the Apple Menu Items folder. If an alias to a hard drive or server volume is in the Apple Menu Items folder, the top five layers of folders are acquired and cached. This is what is done by AMO as the Finder launches and it causes a delay making the Finder Desktop available. The Apple Menu Options then has to continually "watch" for a folder being modified with a file or folder being created or removed and rebuild the cached menu. This approach makes the Apple menu very responsive, because the

menus are all cached. It has the long term effect of imparting a system slowdown during such things as emptying the trash, moving folders, and so on.

AMO has a side effect which exacerbates the issue. Since it creates the Recent Servers folder with aliases to mounted volumes, these volumes are also searched and menus cached. The Apple Menu Options Prefs file grows in size as multiple server volumes are mounted and their folder structure cached in this file. This file can grow to 300-400Kb in size.

The workaround for this problem is not to use an alias to your hard disk in the Apple Menu. The slowdown affect can be lessened by limited use of aliases to certain folders that you wish to navigate hierarchically. Another option is to use one of the alternative products with the other method of creating a hierarchical menu.

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