Finder: How It Updates Remote Windows

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TOPIC --

I have some questions about how the Finder does live updates for windows
showing the contents of remote directories (for example, a folder on a file
server).

Does the Finder do some type of periodic polling? If so, how often? What
performance impact does this have on the local machine and the network?

RESPONSE ---

The Finder periodically (approximately every 10 seconds), checks and
updates open windows from remote servers.

The key facts here are that the Finder checks to see if a window needs
updating, and it does this only for windows currently open on the desktop.

When an update is necessary, you see double arrows flashing at the left
end of the menu bar as the Finder retrieves the necessary
information from the server. This information includes icons to be
displayed (depending on view chosen), disk space used, number of files in
the folder, and, of course, filenames of new files.

The impact the retrieval of this information has on a network is typically
minimal. There is not enough information being retrieved to generate a
large number of packets.

The retrieval of this information can have an impact on the performance of
the local machine. If network access to the server is slow -- whether due
to traffic or a slow link (such as serial-based) -- the Finder will be
locked into this updating process, and your machine will be unavailable
until the update is completed. Normally, this is not an issue, but slow
links, high-traffic networks, multiple remote volumes mounted, or lost
packets can delay the update enough to be noticeable.

The worst case scenario would be lost packets, which could add a delay of
approximately 2 seconds to the update process. Although this would be

unusual, if it happens repeatedly, you should search for the cause of the
lost packets because this indicates a larger network problem.

With System 7, you can choose a particular configuration for your views (via
the Views control panel) that improves performance of Finder updates. In List
Views, deselect the "Calculate folder sizes" option and select the smallest
icon size for the best performance.
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