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LaserWriter IINTX: Benefits of Attached Hard Drive

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TOPIC -----

What are the benefits of using an attached hard drive with a LaserWriter IINTX?

- 1) Is the purpose of a hard drive to:
 - A. increase printing speed through RAM caching?
 - B. centrally locate PostScript fonts?
 - C. to free up space on a local hard drive?
 - D. all the above?

- 2) Currently, TrueType fonts cannot be downloaded to a hard drive connected to a LaserWriter IINTX. Will this feature be used in the future and will you gain any benefit by loading TrueType fonts onto a hard drive connected to a LaserWriter IINTX?

DISCUSSION -----

The purpose of a hard drive is primarily to centrally locate PostScript fonts and to free up space on a local hard drive, but can be all of the above.

A hard disk attached to a LaserWriter IINTX speeds printing only if the fonts required for a document are stored on it and thus do not need to be downloaded over a network. Other uses generally slow down printing unless the hard disk speed versus the network speed is appreciably different. For example, if font scan-conversion (idle-time or otherwise) stores its cache to the hard disk, printing is slowed because it takes time to retrieve the cache from disk. An extremely fast disk may overcome this problem, but we haven't performed any tests that clearly prove this.

Choice B, centrally locating PostScript fonts, is a valid use, and can speed up printing if those fonts are used in the document in question.

Choice C, freeing up local hard disk space, is also valid because every PostScript font located on the hard disk need not be located on the user's hard disk. Therefore the fonts can be removed from the user's hard disk,

freeing up storage space. Of course, a backup of these fonts should be kept somewhere in case the LaserWriter IINTX's hard disk ever fails.

Another way to improve the printing speed of a LaserWriter IINTX, or any PostScript LaserWriter for that matter, is to download fonts using the LaserWriter Font Utility. If there is adequate RAM (or disk space) available, downloading the fonts can greatly increase print speed. And fonts downloaded to RAM are faster than those downloaded to disk, so optimum performance depends on what fonts are used most often and where they are stored.

The difference between using the Font Utility to download fonts versus allowing them to be automatically downloaded with your document is that those fonts downloaded with the utility will persist until the printer is reset or powered off. Those fonts that are downloaded automatically with a document only persist for that job. The next job requiring the same fonts would download them again. This increases network traffic and job overhead appreciably, and with a busy network, can slow printing significantly.

Similar issues are involved with TrueType fonts. With current LaserWriter models, the TrueType fonts and rasterizer are not available in ROM. Therefore, all TrueType fonts used in a document must be downloaded, along with the rasterizer. These fonts and their scan converted data will only be persistent for each job, so the effect will be nearly identical to that with PostScript fonts downloaded from a user's System Folder. The LaserWriter Font Utility, version 7.0, is able to download TrueType fonts as well as PostScript fonts.

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