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LaserWriter: Remote Status Feedback (11/94)

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TOPIC -----

I am using the LaserWriter IINTX in PostScript batch mode, attached to a Hewlett-Packard workstation. The printer's location makes it impossible to see the status lights. Can one write a program to read the status and notify the user of a condition requiring operator intervention?

What is the difference between "PostScript batch" and "PostScript interactive" modes? Would "PostScript interactive" give me the capabilities I need? Are these modes described anywhere?

DISCUSSION -----

PostScript batch mode is the mode to use. To quote page 275 of the PostScript Language Reference Manual (available from Addison-Wesley):

"In batch mode, a job consists of the execution of a single file containing a PostScript program."

The manual goes on to say:

"In interactive mode, a job consists of an arbitrarily long dialogue in which the user issues a PostScript statement and the server executes the statement and prompts for the next one."

Page 282 of the manual discusses status queries:

"The LaserWriter provides a status query facility that enables the host or user to determine what the LaserWriter is doing. The LaserWriter responds to a status query asynchronously with respect to normal job execution; that is, it sends a response immediately, regardless of what has gone on before or how much input data has been buffered. This facility is intended primarily to enable 'spoolers' (printer control programs) to keep track of the activities of LaserWriters under their control."

"The status query mechanism works differently depending on whether AppleTalk or serial communications is in use, but the syntax and semantics of the response are the same in either case."

"In case of AppleTalk, a request to open a connection to a busy LaserWriter yields a rejection packet whose data consists of a status message. There is also a separate status request packet that yields the same information. The path over which the status response packet travels is logically separate from the connection through which the server is receiving its current job."

"In case of serial communication, receipt of a control-T character from either channel (9-pin or 25-pin connector) elicits a one-line status message over the same channel. This channel need not be the one through which the server is receiving its current job. The message is bracketed by the text sequences '%%[' and ']%%' to enable host software to extract the message from ordinary data generated by the job being executed."

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