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LaserWriter PostScript Fax Card: Q&A (5/94)

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TOPIC -----

This article contains questions and answers about the PostScript Fax Card for the LaserWriter Select 360 and LaserWriter Pro 810.

DISCUSSION -----

Q: Can I receive a fax to my hard drive for later printing and/or re-sending?

A: You can delay a fax transmissions up to 24 hours. For example, a fax transmission could be delayed until the evening hours to reduce the cost of transmission. However, you cannot delay when you print a fax job that was received. After the fax is received by the printer and printed, it is flushed from memory and cannot be retransmitted.

Q: What happens to incoming faxes if I am in the middle of a large printing job?

A: If the printer is busy printing a document, the printer will save away incoming faxes in memory, and then print them when it's done with the current job.

Q: What happens if the printer runs out of paper when the printer is left unattended? Does it place the incoming fax into a memory buffer?

A: The default job timeout is set to zero (no timeout); therefore, if the printer runs out of paper, the printer buffers the queued fax print jobs until you add paper. The printer continues to accept incoming faxes until its buffer is full, at which point it no longer accept calls.

Q: How big is the buffer?

A: The amount of RAM allocated for fax operations is product dependent, and is set by the PostScript parameter MaxFaxBuffer. MaxFaxBuffer sets an upper bound on the number of bytes of printer RAM which may be used for incoming and outgoing fax data. For the LaserWriter Select 360, the value is 1,572,864 bytes, whereas the LaserWriter Pro 810 is 2,600,000 bytes. This amount of RAM is constant across printer models, and doesn't increase if you add more RAM to the printer. The fax buffer is not dedicated to solely fax operations, but can be used by other jobs. However, when large fax jobs are processed, the amount of RAM that may be used to process those fax jobs is the MaxFaxBuffer amount. In our tests we received and buffered more than 20 pages of PostScript fax data

on a LaserWriter Select 360f with no difficulties. We have not tested the upper limit, because "your mileage will vary" because of certain variables: is it the fax job a PostScript fax file, are fonts downloaded, faxing in Group 3 standard mode (200 dpi by 100 dpi), G3 fine mode (200 dpi by 200 dpi)?

Faxes sent in the PostScript file format are generally more compact than traditional faxes, reducing the transmission time and cost. If the file contains complex graphics or images then the size of the PostScript file can exceed the size of raster fax. File size is reduced because PostScript Fax uses the built-in LZW compression and decompression capability of PostScript Level 2.

The memory required to handle fonts only becomes an issue when the recipient's fax device is another PostScript Fax printer, and a PostScript file fax is being sent. In this case, if the document being sent requires fonts beyond the standard 35 fonts, the PostScript Fax printer automatically sends the additional fonts along with the PostScript file to the recipient's fax printer. PostScript fonts are generally about 35 K in size and require approximately 35 seconds of additional transmission time for each font transmitted.

It is possible the sender or receiver may have insufficient storage to hold all of a transmitted fax data. Raster faxes can be transmitted in multiple calls.

The transmission of a PostScript language file to a single destination is always made in a single call. This decision to break up a PostScript fax file transmission takes place only after the entire file is in storage of the transmitting printer. If the file will not all fit in storage, the job fails.

If the receiving fax printer runs out of memory during the processing and printing of an incoming fax, it terminates the call. The sending fax printer then terminates the transmission attempt and print a confirmation page noting the transmission failure.

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