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Apple IIGS: Choosing Networked ImageWriter

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TOPIC -----

I have two networks at two different schools. The first network has approximately 30 Apple IIGS systems, one Macintosh SE (acting as an AppleShare File Server), a Macintosh SE with HD20 SC, and four ImageWriter II printers with LocalTalk Option Cards. The network is connected with PhoneNET cabling and the machines are placed in no particular order around the network.

When the last LocalTalk ImageWriter II is added to end of the network, the LocalTalk ImageWriter II printers drop from the Chooser and become invisible to the Apple IIGS systems. The Macintosh SE can still see and print to the ImageWriters, however. If the LocalTalk ImageWriter II is moved to another location on the network with PhoneNET cable and connector box and another LocalTalk ImageWriter II is put in its place, the same thing happens. If the ImageWriter II is removed from the network, the Apple IIGS systems can see the other printers.

The second network uses a StarController and PhoneNET. One channel of the StarController has a Macintosh SE/30 AppleShare File Server; the second channel has 12 Apple IIGS systems, one Macintosh SE, and one LocalTalk ImageWriter II; the third channel has 15 Macintosh SE systems and three LocalTalk ImageWriter II printers. At some point, when enough machines are added, the same thing as above happens -- that is, the Apple IIGS systems can't see the ImageWriters, but the Macintosh systems can.

I ran Inter-Poll on one of these networks after the failure occurred. All Apple IIGS systems and all ImageWriter II printers were visible.

Note that in both cases the Apple IIGS systems start up from the network. What might cause this? Can you recommend any steps to cure this problem?

DISCUSSION -----

NOTE: We are assuming that when you speak of using the Chooser, you're talking about the network ImageWriter CDEV found in the GS/OS Control Panel.

The GS/OS Control Panel network ImageWriter CDEV cannot handle more than three networked ImageWriters. When the fourth ImageWriter is added to the network, all networked ImageWriters disappear. There is no way to change the CDEV's performance.

When using GS/OS applications, the only workaround is to switch off ImageWriters until only three are active on the network; make the printer selection via the CDEV; then power on the remaining printers. Once the selection process is complete the printing process will work properly. Even though the CDEV cannot locate a printer, the GS/OS Print Manager can.

When using ProDOS 8 applications, using Chooser.II allows all available network ImageWriters to appear. Using Chooser.II does not work with GS/OS applications because Chooser.II stores its choices in the ATINIT file associated with that user. GS/OS applications look to the CDEV choices for printing operations.

In summary:

- For ProDOS applications, use Chooser.II.
- For GS/OS applications, use the Control Panel's network ImageWriter CDEV.

When using GS/OS with more than three ImageWriters on the network, perform printer choices when only three ImageWriters are powered on. Once chosen, all printers can be powered on and used normally.

Other than these workarounds, as of April, 1990, there is no solution to the GS/OS Control Panel CDEV problem.

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