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LaserWriter IINT: Switch Changes Disrupt Network

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TOPIC -----

When I set the DIP switch to RS-232 modeA on a LaserWriter IINT connected to a LocalTalk network, it hangs the network. No users can see servers or printers in the Chooser.

Once I set the DIP switch back to LocalTalk mode, the network carries on fine. Why is this happening?

DISCUSSION -----

This is normal behavior, documented in the LaserWriter IINT and NTX Owner's Guide, Appendix C. When you use the DIP switches to configure the port settings, it affects both the DB-25 and mini-8 ports. When you change the switches to RS-232 mode, both ports will use this new setting. Since the RS-232 specification requires idle transmit signals to be held more negative than minus three volts, the LaserWriter will do this for both ports. If the mini-8 port is connected to an AppleTalk network when you do this, the LaserWriter will inject at least -3 volts onto one of the network signal pairs. This is very disruptive, and causes the symptoms you describe.

The LaserWriter IINTX (with version 3.0 ROM) allows software-switching between ports, and the complete disabling of one or the other port. This would allow you to leave both ports connected when changing from AppleTalk to RS-232. You can find the required steps documented in a separate article titled, "LaserWriter IINTX: How To Switch Modes Using Software" parts 1 and 2. Search for "LaserWriter IINTX and setsccbatach" in the Tech Info Library. The LaserWriter IINT doesn't have this same capability.

The LaserWriter IIx and IIg allow simultaneous connections to their different ports, and you can configure each independent of the others. They will also automatically arbitrate between jobs arriving from the different ports. If this is an urgent matter, you may wish to consider upgrading.

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