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LaserWriter IINT: MS-DOS PC Printing Problem

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Some people have had problems printing to a LaserWriter IINT from an MS-DOS PC using Apple's LocalTalk PC card, along with the printing software included with AppleShare PC. A typical configuration includes Microsoft Word (PC) 4.0, under DOS 3.1. Printing originates at the PC and is sent to a LaserShare print server, which, in turn, prints to the LaserWriter. All connections are standard PhoneNET.

About six out of 10 print jobs from Microsoft Word fail and are flushed by the LaserShare during despooling due to an "unknown error". Note: Microsoft Technical Support (on the PC side) says that AppleTalk printing is "an unsupported network".

Interestingly enough, users don't have printing problems with other MS-DOS applications, printing directories, and so on or from any Macintoshes on the network.

This causes the suspicion that the PostScript driver in Microsoft Word may have problems with some of its commands. A number of drivers send their own libraries and even reconfigure the persistent parameters in a LaserWriter. Assuming the LocalTalk cabling and node have been tested along with the LocalTalk PC card for any problems, the source of the problem is the PostScript driver from Microsoft Word.

If you study some of the driver output from various PC packages, you will find that they define huge libraries of commands and even change the parameter-RAM settings. Part of the problem is that the PC software drivers expect to have the LaserWriter connected serially and set the LaserWriter or expect the LaserWriter in a configuration all to themselves. This means that the memory taken up by Macintosh Prep libraries may not let all of the libraries of PostScript code from the PC driver load. This may be what is happening here. To beat the problem, try the following:

- 1) Try a LaserWriter IINTX with memory expanded to at least 4MB.
- 2) Try printing to the LaserWriter just after a powerup and when no other Macintoshes or PCs are printing. This should show if the problem is with the different drivers from the PCs and Macintoshes.
- 3) Print the documents to an Epson printer from the application and

configure the AppleShare PC printer connection for Epson emulation.
This produce PostScript code from the AppleShare PC drivers. These are
known to be compatible with Apple's Macintosh drivers.
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