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Apple File Exchange: Contrasted to File System Translators

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TOPIC -----

What are the technical differences between translating
AppleWorks files with AFE, and using the GS/OS HFS FST to copy them to an
HFS disk? I tried this, and got the following results:

AFE:
Type: 1A__
Creator: pdos
1 resource, type pdos, size 10 bytes, ID 0

HFS FST
Type: p____
Creator: pdos
No resource fork present.

The purpose of this is to translate some AppleWorks files into GreatWorks
or ClarisWorks using the XTND translators. If I translate them with AFE,
everything works as intended. Why doesn't it work with the HFS FST, and
why didn't the creators of the FST make it produce the same results as the
previous translation standard (AFE)?

DISCUSSION -----

The most important difference between AFE and any FST is that AFE is a file
CONTENT translator, while FST (File System Translator) is a file SYSTEM
translator.

A file translator does the following:

- Changes any filetype-specific information.

- Translates the specific information into a different layout.
- Adds any needed datatypes or header information.
- Possibly eliminates unneeded data.

This is specific to content of individual files, such as converting AppleWorks documents to ClarisWorks documents.

FST, on the other hand, translates the file system, including the following:

- Directory structures
- Subdirectory structures
- File types
- Block structures
- Other elements of the filing system

An FST DOESN'T translate the contents of an individual file. An FST DOES allow a foreign file system to reside on a native computer. For example, the Apple IIGS Finder desktop can display Macintosh HFS diskettes.

The results obtained are in line with each of the procedures. Translating the file contents from ProDOS to Macintosh OS requires adding some items, such as the resource fork and a specific file type. Generally a program that translates the contents of a file will also add a file type. This often allows double-clicking the translated file to open the file and application.

The contents of a file aren't touched when copying a file while an FST is in use. In the case presented, the 'p____' type is a generic type representing "some type of (unknown) ProDOS file."

AFE is an appropriate procedure for translating the contents of a file from one application format to another application format. FST is an appropriate method for allowing a disk from one operating system to mount while using a different operating system.

Thinking of FSTs as the "current translation standard" and AFE as the "previous translation standard" is an incorrect approach to understanding the purpose of these two entirely different operations. The creators of FST didn't have anything close to AFE in mind when they began to design their product. Their intention was to translate the filing system information, not the file contents. AFE was designed to translate the file contents, not the system of filing.

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