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AppleTalk Remote Access: When It Doesn't Relinquish Serial Port

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TOPIC -----

AppleTalk Remote Access normally relinquishes the serial port it occupies while waiting to answer a call, if another communications program attempts to use the port. However, this doesn't happen when the following conditions are true:

- 1) The other communications program is using Communications Toolbox.
- 2) The connection tool selected is the "serial tool."

In the described case, the serial tool reports the port busy and AppleTalk Remote Access doesn't relinquish the port. I verified this using all configurations of:

Software: Microphone II v4.0 and MacTerminal
Hardware: Built-in serial port, built-in printer port, QuadraLink ports.

DISCUSSION -----

In order for an application to properly work with the Serial Port Arbitrator, it's necessary for it to:

- 1) Test to see whether the serial port arbitrator is present,
and if present,
- 2) Call OpenDriver to request use of the serial port.

AppleTalk Remote Access would then relinquish its "passive" claim on the

port to the application requesting its use. Once the application is done with the serial port, it calls CloseDriver, which allows AppleTalk Remote Access to reassert its "passive claim." Complete details are available in the AppleTalk Remote Access Developer's Toolkit (Product #R0128LL/A from APDA).

Keep in mind that "passive claim" is true only when AppleTalk Remote Access is set to answer calls.

Until applications are modified to work with the AppleTalk Remote Access Serial Port Arbitrator just described, you'll continue to get the "serial port busy" message. The only workaround is to turn off the answer calls option of AppleTalk Remote Access.

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