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LaserWriter 8 Driver: Printing Always Uses Hard Drive (5/95)

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TOPIC -----

You may not think that printing is in any way related to the amount of hard disk space you have available, but when you are using the LaserWriter 8.x printer driver it is a factor to consider. Even if you have a lot of hard disk space available, it may not be enough to print a very large file.

DISCUSSION -----

LaserWriter driver 8.x actually spools the entire job to disk regardless of whether or not background printing is enabled or disabled; this is different from previous drivers. It does this to perform analysis on the print job while it is being spooled (first pass).

During the second pass (where the QuickDraw code gets converted to PostScript), it uses the data analysis from the first pass to optimize the PostScript code it generates.

LaserWriter driver 8.x performs the following types of analysis:

- Font analysis
- Image analysis
- Pattern analysis
- Bounding box accumulation
- Text measurement

In foreground printing, the performance penalty is negligible for typical short printing jobs, and is outweighed by the performance gains resulting from PostScript code optimization.

It is possible, however, that large foreground printing jobs may incur significant penalties, in both processing time and disk space, as a result of the separate spool pass.

Workarounds

The only workarounds to the problem are to free up space on the hard drive or use an older version of the LaserWriter driver, such as v7.2, and print in the foreground.

QuickDraw GX also uses a two-pass driver, so it also needs free space on the hard drive to print files.

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03 May 1995 - Added keyword; made minor technical updates.

07 Mar 1995 - Article reviewed.

09 Jun 1994 - Added information on QuickDraw GX and tracking information.

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