Tech Info Library

System 6: File Names Starting w/Period Can Confuse System (5/95)

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Revised:        5/16/95
Security:       Everyone
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Article Created: 16 May 1995

TOPIC ---

In my classroom my students are creating folders called ".Sony" (without quotes)
on the hard drives of our school's Macintosh computers. According to the book
"MacWorld Secrets," doing this will trash the hard drive. Is this true? If so,
how can the damage be repaired?

DISCUSSION --

The ".Sony" folder name only causes a minor problem on systems running System 6
or earlier. It is definitely not a problem with systems running System 7 or
higher. Under any circumstance, naming a folder in this way will not "trash" or
otherwise corrupt the data on the hard drive.

The cause of the problem is the way the System 6.0.x and earlier file systems
dealt with files and drivers. Opening files and opening drivers used the same
toolbox routine. The system would look at the name of the "file" and if it began
with a period, would send the open call to the Device Manager. If the file name
did not begin with a period, the call was passed to the File Manager.
Unfortunately, ".Sony" is the name of the floppy driver so trying to open a file
with this name will confuse the system.

Naming a folder ".Sony" should not cause a problem on any Macintosh computer, no
matter which system software is running, since only the Finder itself "opens"
directories and that is not done with the an "Open" call. The Finder simply
searches the catalog file for the names of files and folders whose parent ID is
equal to the ID of the folder. No files are actually opened.

In my testing with System 6, I created a new file in TeachText and tried to save
it with ".Sony" as the file name. The file would be created but TeachText said
it could not open the file to save the data. I tried double-clicking the file
and TeachText would launch but I still received the error dialog stating the
file could not be opened. I could not trash my hard drive as stated in the
MacWorld Secrets book. I could not duplicate this problem under System 7 at

all.

Support Information Services

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Tech Info Library Article Number:17763