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MacX: Q & A From LAN Minds Training (4/93)

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Article Change History

04/20/93 - UPDATED
- To include MacX 1.2 information.

TOPIC ----------

This article is a question and answer session concerning MacX. It takes care of questions the Technical Resources LAN Minds training left unanswered.

DISCUSSION ----------

1) What is the difference between the MacX X display server versus other X display servers? In particular, what are the feature difference?

   Although it is a display server, MacX has X window-manager capabilities that provided Macintosh-like user interface. It has many user-friendly interfaces like font and color managers to make it easier to work with X.

   MacX has two modes, rooted and rootless windows. Effectively, these two modes can provide four displays. With rooted windows, other X window managers can be launched to handle the client windows within the rooted window. The rootless windows provide Macintosh-like windows that appear on the desktop.

   Because MacX runs on the Macintosh hardware platform, all the other Macintosh applications are also available for use. MacX is MultiFinder-compatible.

The key factors in comparing X display servers are the following: screen size and resolution, type and speed of the processor, the availability of a graphics coprocessor, RAM configuration and expandability, color support, and price.

2) It seems like the MacX is more than just an X display server. What client functions are built in?

As far as client-like function, Finder-like X window manager, and a utility to show samples of a font type are built into MacX. Cut and Paste on the Macintosh side is already implemented as part of the Macintosh. MacX also has a color namer and the remote command startup facility. The "rootless" style and the ability to support display area larger than that present on the physical screen are also extensions to the normal functionality.

3) Are there any third parties developing the three-button mouse for the Macintosh?

To locate a vendor's address and phone number, use the vendor name as a search string. These companies manufacture compatible three-button input devices:

- Logitech, Inc.
  - MouseMan (mouse)
  - TrackMan (trackball)
    Both are compatible with Macintosh OS, A/UX, and MacX

- Mouse Systems Corp.
  - A3 Mouse
  - A3 Trackball
    Both are compatible with Macintosh OS, A/UX, and MacX

- Advanced Gravis Computer Technology Ltd.
  - Gravis SuperMouse
    Compatible with Macintosh OS, A/UX, MacX, X11, and SoftPC

4) Is there any capability to cut and paste graphic information?

Cut and paste of graphic information is available. It probably will be a simple cut and paste of pixmaps -- not object-oriented graphics (like MacDraw) -- only bits that are rendered already (like MacPaint). Refer to the MacX 1.2 Manual.

5) An engineer indicated some X window managers are hardware dependent. Are there X window managers that will not work with MacX?

We are not aware of any X window managers that are hardware dependent. We don't know of any window managers that will not work with MacX. MacX

has been used with uwm (Universal Window Manager), twm (Tom's window manager), mwm (Motif Window Manager), and olwm (Open Look Window Manager).

6) What is the relationship between DECWindows and MacX? How do they work together? What do you need to make them work together?

MacX is an X11 display server, just like any other X display server. DECWindows is a name for a broad range of X software. It includes a display server for DEC's Ultrix (UNIX), VAX/VMS and MS-DOS machines, client applications, and programming tools.

If DECwindows can interoperate with X11-conformant servers, it can interoperate with MacX. MacX is shipped as a part of the VAX/VMS Services for Macintosh product and includes the completely DECwindows font set, but this is not required to run DECwindows clients. If the DECwindows fonts are not present, either font name aliases or changes on the VAX side can be easily made to permit MacX to work with DECwindows anyway.

You don't need anything special to make them work together, other than the possible requirement for font aliases listed above.

There is one known compatibility problem. It appears the most significant bit is reversed in the client used to display the Digital logo. When shown on MacX, eight-bit bands of information is reversed. The exact problem has not been identified in either the MacX or DEC client.

7) Will the ability of extending the X Window standard display server and clients create compatibility problems in the field?

The X11 protocol permits clients to ask whether the server supports particular extensions by name. Properly written clients might fall back on a different strategy if extensions they normally use don't exist. But yes, there can be "compatibility" problems, if this is not the case.

8) Does the toolkit that MacX uses conform to a standard toolkit like Xtk?

This question is based on a misunderstanding. The Xtk code runs on the CLIENT side. It specifies a way of programming user interfaces in the CLIENT program. MacX (or any other X11 server) simply draws what the client asks for. There is no "toolkit" in MacX.

9) Is there any graphic model being used in MacX (like Display Postscript)?

The name is "The X Window System" according to "X protocol version 11". MacX conforms completely to these specifications, except as outlined in the appendixes of the manual. (In some very small ways, MacX diverges

slightly.)

10) Is it possible to change the window types available in the Set Window Type menu?

No. Only the five show can be selected. "Client Specified" means the client specifies one of the ones shown (1 through 5).

11) What are the official names of the X Window System?

The official names of the software from MIT is:

- X
- X Window System
- X Version 11
- X Window System Version 11
- X11

Note: Phrases like "X.11", "X-11", and "X-Windows" are explicitly excluded and should NOT be used to describe the X Window System.

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