Tech Info Library

NetWare: Time Stamps Cause Unrecognized Files in QuickTime 3/93

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TOPIC ---

I'm using Novell 3.11, NetWare for the Mac 3.011, and System 7. I
discovered that NetWare for the Macintosh doesn't provide a "transparent"
file system like a standard AppleShare server. There are problems with
QuickTime and backup systems.

DISCUSSION --

NetWare changes a file in two ways when copied onto a NetWare volume:

• The modified time of the file is truncated to an even number of
  seconds.

• The created time is set to (an even approximation of) the current
  time, thus you get a file with a modifed time earlier than the
  creation time.

Because of the way the Macintosh operating system handles time stamps,
these two changes can cause potential problems with QuickTime, backup
systems, and compiler "make" systems. Whether they do cause problems
depends on your software and how you use it.

How To Reproduce the Problem

Here's how to reproduce the problem using QuickTime, it requires:

• An application to play and copy QuickTime movies (for example,
  Simple/Movie Player from Apple)

• A QuickTime movie

- An application or DA where you can paste your movie (the QuickTime compatible Scrapbook will do)

All these should reside on a local Macintosh hard disk or on a normal AppleShare volume. Follow these steps:

1) Open the QuickTime movie with the application and copy it to the Clipboard.

2) Open the application where you'll paste it from the Clipboard.

3) Play the movie from within the application where you pasted it.

4) Move the movie and the application where it's pasted to another location on your local Macintosh hard disk or normal AppleShare volume.

5) Open the application where it's pasted again and play the movie. QuickTime will search for the movie because you've moved it. Once found (probably very quickly) it will play.

6) Move the movie onto your NetWare volume. Remove the original (that is, keep just the copy on NetWare).

7) Open the application it's pasted to again and play the movie. QuickTime will search for the movie and fail to find it. Manually locate the movie using QuickTime's dialog and select it. QuickTime will report "not a valid movie file."

Note that the movie is actually a valid file and you can repaste it into the application. But every time you move the movie off the NetWare volume and back again (or onto another NetWare volume), the playback will break and you'll have to repaste.

This occurs because NetWare changes the timestamps on the file that QuickTime uses to check whether the file is the correct one. Any program that relies on timestamps (backup systems, compiler makes) may fail for the same reason, if files are copied to NetWare volumes.

If you use NetWare, check very carefully that things are working, especially your backups. You may use NetWare without any problems, and much software isn't affected. But other software will be affected, and you may not notice the damage immediately. Its full effects aren't known.

Novell is fixing this problem in version 4.0 of Netware for Macintosh, and is working on the problem in 3.11.

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