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Open Transport: General Information Q & A (3/96)

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TOPIC -----

This article is a general information questions and answers for Apple Open Transport.

Open Transport 1.1 is now available, and Apple recommends upgrading to it. Also refer to Open Transport 1.1 Reference Questions and Answers Tech Info Library articles for the most recent information.

DISCUSSION -----

Question: What is Open Transport?

Answer: Open Transport is the new modern networking and communications subsystem for the Mac OS. Open Transport is based on industry standards and brings a new level of networking connectivity, control, and compatibility to Macintosh customers, while preserving and enhancing the Mac OS, built-in support for easy-to-use networking.

Question: What long-range Apple goals are advanced through Open Transport?

Answer: Apple believes that communications and collaboration technologies are integral and fundamental to personal and workgroup computing. With Open Transport, our goal is to make the Mac OS the best desktop OS for multiprotocol networking, anywhere.

Question: What needs must be addressed to be "the best"?

Answer: Networking and communications technologies are mission critical, so reliability is a base-level requirement. Organizations require interoperability in heterogeneous environments; full compliance with standards is necessary. High

performance is also key. Increasing file sizes -- often related to the rich media types found in graphics and publishing, multimedia, video production, and technical markets -- create a demand for effective use of higher bandwidth communications technologies such as ISDN, FDDI, fast Ethernet and ATM.

Beyond these base-level requirements, network managers, end-users, and developers each have additional needs.

Network managers need networked systems to support a flexible model of administration that accommodates both centralized and decentralized management models.

Users are typically more interested in using communications as a basis for productivity applications. As such, they are interested in networking that is easy to set up and easy to use. This becomes even more important when users are mobile, needing access to networking services from wherever they may be -- without requiring complex reconfiguration for each connection type.

Developers need to address the broadest possible markets with minimum incremental investment. In short, they need standards-based, cross-platform APIs and development tools.

Question: What were some of the key goals driving the development of Open Transport?

Answer: Apple began with two key assumptions: that networking is inherently a multi-platform, multi-protocol proposition; and that customers cannot start over to achieve networking interoperability. This led us to adopt five key design goals:

- Open Transport must protect customer and developer investments in existing network infrastructure and applications.
- Open Transport must be based on existing cross-platform industry standards.
- Open Transport must provide users with an easy to set-up, easy to use abstraction of the underlying complexity of multi-protocol networking.
- Open Transport must also provide a complementary abstraction of networking and communications services for applications developers.
- Open Transport must offer a flexible run time model -- one that lets a specific protocol be configured and selected at run time, rather than statically linked at compile time.

Article Change History:

26 Mar 1996 - Added statement on Open Transport 1.1 release.

27 Nov 1995 - Added keyword and reference to OT 1.0.8 information.

22 Aug 1995 - Changed title.

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