Tech Info Library

Newton 2.0 OS: Package Activation Issues (2/96)

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Revised:        2/5/96
Security:       Everyone


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Article Created: 4 December 1995
Article Reviewed/Updated: 5 February 1996


TOPIC -------------------------------------------------------------


This article discusses package activation issues with the Newton 2.0 OS.


DISCUSSION --------------------------------------------------------


Getting Rid Of Undeleteable Apps
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Here's a tip to help you deal with incompatible applications - even ones that
mess the system up so badly you cannot delete them.

The procedure is quite simple. The first section should be enough to get you
going. The rest is for people who want more details.

Previously, if you had a package on the internal store that caused trouble at
startup your only option was to completely erase the internal store (reset with
the power switch down). Similarly, if you had a package on a card that
interfered with mounting the card you had to force the card to be erased (insert
the card with Prefs open).

In Newton 2.0 OS it is possible to suppress package activation. This allows the
unit to start up, or a card to be inserted without running any of the packages'
code. This gives you a chance to delete the problem package instead of having to
completely erase the store it is on. Macintosh users will find it reminiscent of
starting up with the shift key down to keep extensions from loading.


Suppressing Package Activation on Internal Store
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To suppress package activation on the internal store:
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Step 1
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Reset the Apple MessagePad

Step 2
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Turn the Apple MessagePad over and hold the pen down in the left 1/4-in. of the
screen. Keep the pen down until you see a message asking if you want to activate
the packages on the internal store.

Step 3
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Select "No."
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When you open the extras drawer you will see X's over some of the icons. This
indicates those packages are not active. This procedure does not affect the
packages that are built into the ROM. Only the packages you have loaded, or that
were pre-loaded onto the unit at the factory can be disabled in this way.

The only "trick" is that you can put the pen down too far to the left - resting
against the raised edge of the plastic case. There is a small "dead" area at the
border of the screen and the case that you need to avoid.

Note:
If you are using a PIN number, you should wait until the PIN number box appears
on the screen before pressing down on the left side of the screen.

The message comes up before the splash screen disappears, so if the splash
screen disappears, you need to try again - holding the pen a little further in
from the edge.

Activating a Package Once It Has Been Deactivated
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Tapping on an icon with an X causes the package to be activated. Activate them
one at a time until you identify the package giving you trouble. For example, if
the symptom is the Names application will not open anymore, tap on an icon with
an X, and once the X disappears see if the Names application works.

If at this point you can delete the icon, do so. If it messes up the extras
drawer, you'll have to reset again suppressing package activation. This time you
should just delete the icon without first activating it.

When searching for the offending apps remember to look in the extensions folder
(or show "All Icons"). In 1.X systems there were some packages that did not have
a corresponding icon in the extras drawer. In 2.0, every package has at least
one icon.

Storage Cards
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The same procedure can be applied to cards. Insert the card. After you lock it,
hold the pen down near the left edge of the screen. You will be asked if you
want to activate the packages on the card.

Resetting Orientation and Backdrop Application - A More Advanced Trick
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If you reset the unit and hold down the pen near the top edge of the screen
(instead of the left edge), in addition to suppressing package activation, the
unit's orientation and backdrop app will be reset to their defaults - portrait
orientation and Notepad as backdrop.

This is useful if you have some application that seems to be working fine -
until you make it the backdrop.

The top edge only has these additional features when you reset the unit. When
inserting storage cards, you can use the top or left edge to suppress package
activation.

Other Times Icons are X'd Out
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An icon with an X indicates its package is inactive. Even if you don't suppress
package loading, there are other circumstances when you might run into inactive
packages. The most common would be if you have two copies of the package
installed. For example, package "foo" is on the internal store and a card
containing "foo" is inserted. The icon for "foo" on the card will have X over
it.

There might be other odd circumstances where you briefly see an X. For example,
moving a package between stores causes it to be deactivated, moved, then
reactivated. We try not to show the X in this situation because the package is
only temporarily inactive, but in some circumstances the X is briefly visible.

If you see an inactive icon, go ahead and tap on it. The system will attempt to
activate and launch it. If there is a problem you will get an error message. The
message should be an informative one like: "The package "foo" (on store "my
card") was not activated because a package by the same name (on store
"internal") is already in use."

Package Freezing
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If you do not know what frozen packages are, you probably will soon.

 ** There are a variety of third party developers providing utilities that turn
on this latent feature of the Extras Drawer.**

Frozen packages are inactive packages. The difference is that they are purposely
made inactive by the user and stay inactive until the user taps on them.
Suppressing package activation as described above only deactivates packages

temporarily. If you reset the unit (or reinsert the card), the icons that were X'd out won't be anymore.

Activating packages uses up some of the system's working memory and takes time. Cards with a large number of packages can take a long time to mount and can cause you to run low on memory.

A way to work around this is to selectively "Freeze" (deactivate) the packages you don't use very often. You freeze a package or group of packages by selecting them in the Extras Drawer and choosing freeze from the action button. Its icon will turn into a snowflake indicating that it's frozen. You thaw (activate) a frozen package by simply tapping on it.

The package freezing feature in the Extras Drawer is not available by default. You need to get a utility package to turn it on.

Article Change History:
05 Feb 1996 - Reviewed and reclassified.
15 Dec 1995- Corrected minor typo.

Support Information Services

Tech Info Library Article Number:19015