EtherTalk: The Number of Possible Nodes in a System

This article last reviewed: 27 June 1988

Here is a brief description of a corporation's EtherNet installation. They have used Ethernet as the primary communications medium for achieving transparent connectivity throughout the system.

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Number of segments   > 50
Number of nodes      >500
Span of network      > 20 KM (using Ethernet bridges)
Number of campuses   4
Number of Kinetics FastPath Gateways = 9
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The current Node ID field allows only 127 individual stations. Does that mean only 128 Macintosh computers can be connected directly to the Ethernet? What about software bridges like Liaison? What about GatorBox, which promises to become the InterBridge of EtherTalk?

EtherTalk makes no distinction (through node IDs) between users and servers. Rather, it reserves two nodes for "send to self" and "send to all" addresses. This leaves 254 of 256 possible nodes available for users and servers.

Customers use Zone and Net IDs to divide users into zones. Gatorbox's Ethernet-to-Ethernet bridging capabilities allow EtherTalk networks to extend well beyond the 254 nodes available. Under Gaterbox, you can directly connect Ethernet Macintoshes by routing Zone and Net IDs similar to the zoning done with InterBridges.

Keywords: <None>

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19960215 11:05:19.00
Tech Info Library Article Number: 3072