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ImageWriter II, LQ Interleaving Problem: An AppleShare Solution

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The ImageWriter II and ImageWriter LQ interleaving problem (where two or more different printing jobs are interleaved together) is a carry-over from the days of the 128K/512K systems. Because of the limited memory of those systems, it was necessary to spool the file being printed to one page at a time. This meant a multi-page document would be sent as a series of print jobs -- not as one complete job. Software manufacturers knew of this limitation and wrote their applications accordingly.

Many of these manufacturers continue to use the same print routines, with additions for new features, rather than rewrite them to more fully use the features of the drivers.

Print drivers maintain connections with any networked printer for the duration of the current print job. As long as applications still use the older style of one-page-per-job, the interleave problem will continue. Many newer manufacturers are now writing the applications as recommended by Apple in "Inside Macintosh", so the problem is slowly diminishing.

AppleShare Print Server will resolve this problem. It contains a process whereby the user can specify the time-out interval between pages of a print job.

If the time-out is set to 1 minute (for example), any jobs sent by a user, with less than a minute between them, will be printed as one job. However, if a short interval (perhaps 10 seconds) is set, and it takes 15 seconds to send the next page, another user's job could be queued in between the two pages, and the interleave problem would still exist. There is no set value for the time-out feature that will work with every application. The default value is 5 seconds. Some applications may need a higher value if they require more time to set up the print job.

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