

ver the last few years, many big companies have made the dubious decision of creating Windows NT networks, due to NT's **alleged** power and stability. As Mac users, we know this to be far, far from the truth, but generally have had to watch this movement to NT take place, as we ourselves have little say in the matter. We only have to use the computers, after all.

This NT migration has forced an extra pressure onto us Mac users, by providing IT administrators with a further excuse to try and phase out our beloved Macs - they're not fully compatible enough with NT networks.

This is partly true, since although NT network servers can support AppleTalk access, access to an entire NT network, such as printers, is impossible.

This is where DAVE, from Thursby Systems, steps in.

DAVE essentially provides an interface from your Mac to an NT network, and allows your Mac to wear a Windows mask when looking out into this NT network. Your Mac will be able to share files directly with other PCs (NT3.5 or W95 based) and access printers attached to NT machines, just as if the computers controlling them were Macs (we can but wish). Indeed your Mac can act as a gateway to printers for other Macs, which don't have DAVE installed themselves. The other great thing about DAVE is that your network supervisor doesn't need to know about it, since all the setup is done on your Mac. This has huge benefits over some other products which require the NT servers to be configured (PC/Mac LAN for example). DAVE really is hassle free.

Power for the rest of us!

Installation is easy - as it should be. It only takes a few seconds to install the appropriate files (a couple of extensions and control panels), and then this must be followed by a restart.

The first time you want to use DAVE, you have to configure it - which means, telling DAVE where to look for serves and the like. This is all done through a single control panel called NetBios. This is perhaps the trickiest part of using DAVE - but it's not DAVE's fault, rather the unfriendly way NT networks seem to operate.

Once this is set-up though, DAVE operates seamlessly with your Mac, and it really is set-it-and-forget-it. From now on, the NT network resembles an AppleShare network.

Sharing files works between PCs/Macs just as if it were a Mac/Mac connection. The DAVE client in the Chooser allows you to log onto any NT/W95 machine as if it were a Mac server, and select what service you want to use which is logged onto that machine (for example hard drives, CDs or printers). If you select a drive or CD and you have PC exchange set up correctly, then when you log on, all the documents are linked with the correct applications. It really is that easy.

Accessing printers is also a snap. By selecting a printer attached to a PC, clicking a single button, the printer becomes available to you on the desktop (the only caveat here is that the printer must be a postscript printer). One really great feature of this though is that it is possible (well, incredibly easy) to make any PC printer you have access to available to any other Mac user who is on the same AppleTalk network as yourself.

or example, my PowerBook 1400 is linked up to the NT network, and with DAVE can access the local PC postscript printer. My friend, on the other side of the room with an LC can access that printer through the AppleTalk network (since my machine has, in effect that PC printer directly attached).

The ability to do this can really not be understated.

As I've described above, DAVE is clearly able to allow a Mac to look out into the evil empire with ease. But, DAVE version 2, is also able to allow PC computers to log on to your Mac - as if it was a PC itself. So, bidirectional information sharing is possible, and works absolutely beautifully.

AVE is a great piece of software. It does what it claims with no problems, and with incredible ease. If you live in a M\$ network, you have no excuse not to buy DAVE.

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