Apple II
Technical Notes

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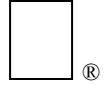
Developer Technical Support

GS/OS
#10: How Applications Find Their Files

Revised by: Dave   Lyons
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Written by: Dave   Lyons
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This Technical Note explains how applications should find configuration and other application-related files.

Changes since January 1990: Stated explicitly that the @ prefix is useful only to applications.

When an application is launched, GS/OS sets prefix 9 to the application's parent directory. It also sets prefix 1 to the same directory if the length of the pathname is within a 64-character limit. It does not set prefix 0 to any special value.

If your application uses a partial pathname and depends upon prefix 0 to find files at the same directory level, it may be working by accident (prefix 0 is accidently set to the right directory), and sooner or later it won't work.

If your application needs to load a file named TitleScreen, the best way is to use the pathname 9:TitleScreen. If you just use TitleScreen, you are using prefix 0, and you may or may not be looking in the right directory.

Files storing user-specific data should be stored in the at sign (@) prefix—this is just like prefix 9, except that it is set to the user's user folder on an

AppleShare server if the application was launched from a server. Use @:MySettings rather than 9:MySettings or MySettings. (If you want to retrieve the value of the @ prefix, you can call `ExpandPath` on the pathname "@:".) Note that the @ prefix was introduced in System Software 5.0.

The @ prefix is useful only for applications, not for Desk Accessories, CDevs, initialization files, or anything else; this type of code can get the path of the user's folder by using the AppleShare FST's FST-Specific call `GetUserPath`.

Further Reference

- *GS/OS Reference*
- AppleTalk Technical Note #8, Using the @ Prefix