

A quick comparison of Active & Passive connections:

Link2 treats network connections as "active" or in a "wait state". When a user has logged into LINK2 they already have "live" connections to the various long-distance databases. Any button in the environment may send (activate) a message to any one of these links. These links respond with the appropriate result. In the picture below is shown a connection which enables you to Play a sound in the LINK2 system. When a button in LINK2 is clicked on, it sends a message to the appropriate database, this returns the sound chosen and plays it for the local computer. This link is switched on upon activation of the button, and it turns off upon completion of the task required. The major difference between this and a real network is that the LINK2 box is simply a software simulation that sits between the local station and the long-distance locations.

When multiple buttons are placed in layers (one button over another) then the sequence can be imagined to function much as the picture below. Rather than having the connection between local station and long-distance database, now the connection is made to the Toronto sounds database first, the sound is played, now this connection is broken. Instructions are sent to Cambridge to grab a specific puzzle, its' result is passed back to the local station. The resultant connection is now between the local station and Cambridge. The answer the user provides to the puzzle is passed back to Cambridge and whether or not the next action is permitted is decided in the comparison between the given and stored answer.

A look at the Direct-Connect mode:

When a User decides to Create an object then another type of connections occurs. The connection simulates the Telnet connection on mainframes. The user actually logs in and works with the distance computer database. They have the tools necessary for the job at that site.

What they create is left on the distance computer database. IT IS NOT DIRECTLY INSERTED INTO THE PAGE THEY ARE WORKING ON AT THEIR STATION. When this connection is active it suspends all others.

The difference between this & other Telnet sessions resides in the fact that the user, in many cases, has his own tools available to apply to the distance computer. For example they will have their personal dictionaries available to them when working on a WORD-JUMBLE puzzle. All techniques are the same whether on the local or distance computer.

In this scenario the user logs directly into the database, works there and creates a new object for that database. When they return to the story they can carry that object back with them. In some cases it is automatically linked to the button which originally logged them onto that database to begin with. After the first connect it is constantly on line as simply another tool available at any time. This would simulate, in the case of LINK2, having 3 to 5 simultaneous connections to various Telnet sites. These sites are in a "connected" but "wait" state. That is , the connection is active the moment a call is made to it, otherwise it simply waits for the user to access it. IN THIS CASE LINK2 SIMULATES A MODE OF WORKING WHICH IS NOT YET POSSIBLE ON THE REAL NETWORKS, This mode, however, is what should occur in the near future.

The objective of this mode of working is to impress upon the users that the distance computer databases are simply other tools at their disposal in their own handling and manipulation of information. It is also designed to impress upon them the fact that they need not have all objects contained within their own documents, but that it may simply activate a connection which is presently waiting and accessible from their system.

