Apple II
Technical Notes

Syndicomm
Syndicated Communities

Apple IIGS
#200: New Request Codes

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This Note covers new request codes officially defined by Syndicomm, which took over processing requests for file types, resource types, and similar allocated resources after Apple Developer Technical Support ceased management of them.

$3680 askAnyoneOpenURL

The `askAnyoneOpenURL` request can be sent by any application, desk accessory, or other software that wishes to request that another application attempt to handle a Universal Resource Locator (URL) identifying some Internet resource.

```
dataIn:
      +$00 WORD        pCount (must be 2)
      +$02 WORD        flags
      +$04 LONG        urlPtr

dataOut:
      NULL
```

The `pCount` must currently be 2. If this request is altered in the future, additional parameters may be added.

The `flags` parameter provides bit flags that customize the request:

> Bits 14-2:   reserved, must be 0
>
> Bits 1-0:   00 -   Open URL in the handler's preferred manner.
>
>   01 -   Open URL in the foreground.
>
>   10 -   Open URL in the background.
>
>   11 -   Defer opening URL until the user the handler to the foreground.

> These flags have to be interpreted carefully, depending on the particular application.

> The last option, to defer opening the URL, asks the handler to queue the request until the user brings the handler to the foreground. This lets a user click, for example, several FTP links in a web browser, deferring downloads until later.

The `urlPtr` parameter must be a pointer to a C-string that contains the URL to be processed. The URL must be in standard form, such as "http://www.syndicomm.com" or "mailto:sheppy@syndicomm.com". Note that mailto does not use any slashes following the colon; neither does news ("news:comp.sys.apple2").

Other popular service types require slashes:
- http://www.syndicomm.com (for a Web site)
- ftp://ftp.info.apple.com (for an FTP site)
- file:///Hard.Disk/Path/File (for a local file)

The request should be sent with the `sendToAll` and `stopAfterOne` flags set, so that the URL is processed only once, by a suitable application. An application that accepts the request should do so only if the URL is one it can process (ie, a web browser would accept URLs beginning with "http://" and so forth).

The `askAnyoneOpenURL` request is clearly most useful if software that lets multiple applications be running at once is in use (such as *The Manager*) or if some or all Internet programs are written as NDAs.

Future Enhancement

Obviously, this request is less useful if the user has multiple applications that can handle a particular service type. At some point in the future, a Control Panel may become available that will automatically handle dispatching `askAnyoneOpenURL` requests to the appropriate application. This will let applications using this very simple protocol take advantage of an Internet Applications control panel with no extra changes.

This control panel can do its job by simply patching `SendRequest` to intercept `askAnyoneOpenURL` requests and redirect them by looking up the appropriate application to use in a database. Applications don't even need to know that the control panel and/or database exist.

Further Reference
- System 6.0 Documentation