

## Review: Double Talk v1.1

Reviewed By: [Kirk Hiner](#)

Review Date: September 26, 2001

Format: CD

Developer: [Connectix Corp.](#)

Minimum Requirements: PowerPC, Mac OS 8.1, 24MB RAM, 5MB hard disk space

OS X Compatible: No

Retail Price: \$99

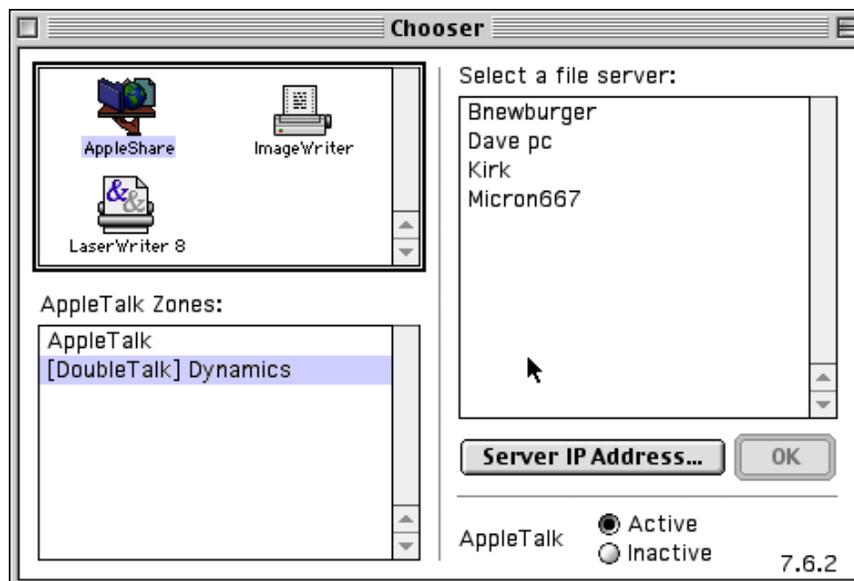
Availability: Out now

Simple is not always better. Ragu spaghetti sauce is simple, but it's not as good as my mother's six hour recipe. Snap-Tite models are simple, but they're not as cool looking as Industrial Light and Magic models. Simple Text is simple, but it's not as functional as Word...of course, it's also not nearly as annoying, but that's beside the point.

Connectix DoubleTalk is simple. Of the Macintosh/Windows connectivity software products I've used, it's unquestionably the easiest for Mac users to set up. Unfortunately, it's also the least functional.

The thing with most Mac/Windows connectivity products is that they require a decent knowledge of Windows networking to set up; both the Mac and the PC must be configured to see one another, and a lot of PC terminology is used even on the Mac end. DoubleTalk's goal is to minimize reliance on PC knowledge, and this it does quite well. Pretty much all you need to connect to a PC network is the domain name and password. I don't recommend asking your IT manager for this information, though...steal it! It gives you a spy-like feeling of cool.

Once you've got DoubleTalk installed and connected, accessing the PC is as simple as accessing the Chooser. Select AppleShare, and a new "[DoubleTalk]" zone will appear in the AppleTalk Zone window. From there, simply select the computer to which you want to connect, and there you have it.



Note that with the file servers listed above, Dave pc is actually a Macintosh running Virtual PC

December 13, 2002

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Unfortunately, the limitations start immediately thereafter. Unlike when connecting Macs through AppleShare, DoubleTalk cannot be used to connect all folders at start-up, or at least not with the chooser. Instead, you have to use the Connectix DoubleTalk Mounter Volume Selection Window. No big deal, except isn't DoubleTalk supposed to make all of this *easier*?

Once you do have the proper PC drives mounted on your desktop, copying files to and from is as easy as moving files between folders on your Macintosh, and almost as speedy. There's no oily Windows residue left behind, so Mac users with little or no PC experience need not be intimidated.

DoubleTalk is a one way street, and that can be good or bad depending upon your situation. Although Mac users can see the PC computer(s), PC users cannot see the Mac. Therefore, in order to share files, you'll have to know where to go digging because the PC user can't give it to you. On the other hand, you won't need to worry about anyone poking around through your Mac files like you'll be poking around through theirs.

Of course, you won't want to use DoubleTalk for any inter-office espionage. Aside from the fact that it's just **wrong**, you may also leave footprints. For instance, I used DoubleTalk to back-up files from a PC onto the Mac, compressing them into StuffIt in the process. This seemed to be working just fine until I needed to access these files in CuteFTP on the PC. Suddenly, CuteFTP was telling me the modification dates on every file DoubleTalk touched were 01/01/70. I launched Windows Explorer to verify this, and it revealed the modification dates had been completely wiped out. On the Mac side, the modification dates all appeared fine. None of the files were damaged, but this isn't the sort of behavior one hopes to see...especially when dealing with those stingy IT types who probably were against your filthy Mac accessing their precious network in the first place. For the record, I performed the same function when using Thursby Software's Dave, and the modification dates were left alone.

Another great feature of DoubleTalk is that it lets you access printers on the PC network, provided they're PostScript. Without installing any specific drivers, I was able to connect and print to the HP LaserJet 4050N. In fact, a quick test on print speed indicated that queues moved more quickly in DoubleTalk than with Thursby Software's Dave. However, our Epson 800N, which is not PostScript compatible, did not show up at all.

With v1.1 of DoubleTalk, Connectix introduced compatibility with the Macintosh Network Browser. Hopefully, with v1.2, they'll make it more dependable. Although I could find the DoubleTalk network in the Network Browser, I could not get any of our PC devices to show up in it. Again, it's quite possible the error was on my end, but my troubleshooting could not pinpoint the problem.

DoubleTalk has a couple other limitations as well, namely the fact that it does not work over a PPP/Remote Access Server that supports AppleTalk (you can, however, connect remotely to a server that does not support AppleTalk), and that AppleTalk must be active to connect. The importance of these limitations depends upon the individual needs of the user.

Of course, that's pretty much what DoubleTalk is all about, isn't it. Yes, you need access to PC files and printers, so how do you go about it? Is it important that PC users also be able to see your Mac? Do you have a decent understanding of PC networking? Do you have the blessing of your IT manager? If so, it may be best to consider different options. On the other hand, if you're simply looking for a quick, cheap(er) way to access a PC network and you don't expect any help from the PC side, DoubleTalk is your safest bet. There's some funky behavior and bugs you'll need to work around, and expect to run into a few error messages along the way (the manual tells you how to handle no less than thirty of them, and I don't find that encouraging), but DoubleTalk ultimately does its job.

Of course, Ragu does its job, but wouldn't we all rather have mom's spaghetti sauce? I think I'm going to have to go home this weekend.

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