



Apple II GS

#5: Window and Menu Titles

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This Technical Note discusses spacing for both window and menu titles.

Changes since November 1988: Revised to include new information on the default placement of the Apple menu.

Strings used for window titles should always have a space as the first and last characters. This spacing is especially important for windows that use a lined window title bar since, without the beginning and ending space, the line pattern in the title bar runs against the title. Since there will be window editor desk accessories which allow the user to change the title bar pattern without the application knowing, you should pad your window titles with spaces even if you are using black window title bars.

The Window Manager does not force spaces on either side of titles to optimize the window frame drawing speed; it is much faster to let the text punch a hole in the title bar pattern than to compute the rectangle, fill it, and draw the text.

To provide the user with a consistent visual interface, you should also pad your menu titles with spaces. If you use either one or two spaces (the Apple II GS Finder has used two) before and after each menu title, your menu titles will be consistent and balanced (two spaces work well in 640 mode where one space usually suffices for 320 mode). Although it is true that a menu bar will look about the same if the first menu title has two spaces before it and no space following it and all the other menu titles have four spaces before them, when the user pulls down the menu, the Menu Manager's highlighting will clearly (and embarrassingly) show the spaces in the menu titles.

If you would like to place the Apple menu differently, you must use Menu Manager calls since you cannot place spaces around the at sign (@) which the Menu Manager uses to represent the Apple logo in a menu title. The easiest way to accomplish this is calling `SetMTitleStart` to set the starting position for the leftmost title (usually the Apple menu) within the current menu bar. The Apple II GS Finder has used a value of 10 (\$0A) pixels.

Beginning with System Software 5.0, the Apple menu is placed at a default of 10 pixels from the left edge of the menu bar in 640 mode or five pixels in 320 mode. If you use `SetMTitleStart` to change the default, the value is still interpreted as an absolute placement from the left edge of the menu bar. For example, `SetMTitleStart(6)` moves the Apple

menu one pixel to the right of the default in 320 mode and four pixels to the left of the default in 640 mode. Be sure not to use `SetMTitleStart` to set the Apple menu starting place to the left of the default, as doing so interferes with the AppleShare activity arrows.