

How to fix a computer that has lost its sound

January 13th, 2010, 3:02 pm · [Post a Comment](#) · posted by [Ed Schwartz, NOCCC](#)



*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at noccc.org. And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at ocregister.com/link/pcclub, to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

QUESTION: The speakers that I have connected to my computer system stopped working a couple of weeks ago. Other than taking my system to a computer repair shop I don't know what to do. For example, I can watch a PowerPoint presentation, but don't get any sound, i.e., music. Any suggestions?

PC CLUB: There are several explanations for losing your sound from the very simple to an actual hardware failure. Here are some possible problems.

Connection Problem: Although it may sound obvious, the first thing I usually do in is check all of the connections to the computer. Most speakers use an AC adaptor that plugs into an outlet and have a cable that plugs into the green jack on the rear of the PC. After checking the connections, the next thing I do is try another set of speakers or even a headset if possible.

Hardware Problem: To see if you have a hardware problem you can open your Device Manager and check the sound hardware. Follow these



steps:

1. In Windows XP, right-click the My Computer icon and select Properties.
2. Next, select the Hardware tab and click the Device Manager button.
3. With Windows Vista or Windows 7, right-click Computer and select Properties.
4. Next, click the Device Manager icon at the upper left. When you get to the Device Manager, look for the Sound entry and make sure there are no warning symbols. A black exclamation point (!) on a yellow field indicates the device is in a problem state, like the image on right. A red "X" indicates a disabled device.
5. If it's disabled, try re-enabling it. Frequently, a device that is not functioning correctly can be uninstalled and subsequently reinstalled automatically during the system re-boot. To uninstall a sound device, just right-click it from the Device Manager and select Uninstall. Restarting your PC will reinstall it.

Software Problem: You might try updating to a more recent version of Windows Media Player. You can download the program at Windows Media Download Center (link: bit.ly/wmpupdate). The most recent version is 12. If you are using Windows 7, Windows Media Player 12 is included.

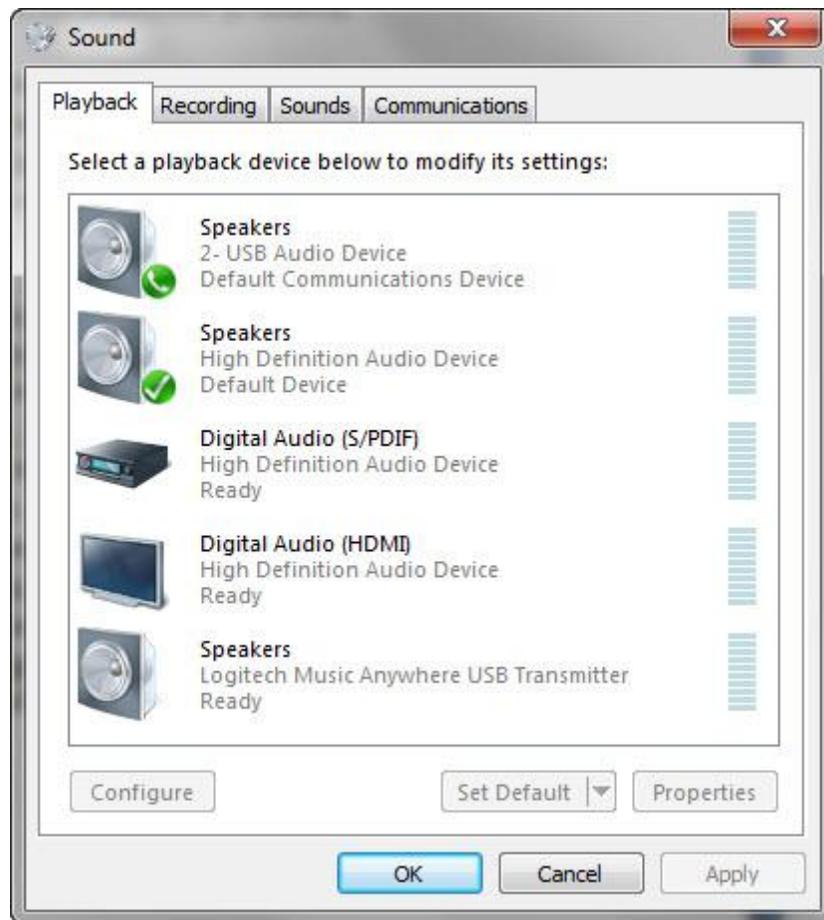
Driver Problem: Another possibility is that the driver for your sound card has been corrupted, especially if you have a dedicated card such as a Sound Blaster card. If this is the case, reinstalling the software that came with the card may resolve the issue.

Configuration Problem: If you have more than one sound device hooked to your PC, you may have your settings directing the audio to the incorrect device. For example, if you have a headset plugged in to your PC it may be receiving the audio. Also, if you use a device such as the wireless Logitech Music Anywhere connected to your PC you should check that the audio is being directed to your speakers. You can check this in several ways.

- With Windows XP, right-click the speaker icon on the lower right of the System Notification area and select Adjust Audio Properties. Select the Audio tab in the

Window that opens and look in the section labeled “Sound playback.” The drop-down box in that section lists the possible devices. If you have several choices there make sure you select the one for your speakers.

- With Windows Vista or Windows 7, right-click the speaker icon and select “Playback devices.” In the window that opens you can right-click the device that you want to be the default and select “Set as Default Device.” If it has a green check next to it, it is already the default device. If any application is open that plays audio, it must be re-opened if you change the playback device.



Tip: Your PC can send audio to only one device at a time. Since I have several devices on my PC for playing sound I keep an icon on my desktop that allows me to quickly change devices. I do this by opening the Control Panel and right-clicking the Sound icon and selecting “Create shortcut”.

If none of these solutions work, it's possible that you have experienced a hardware failure and it may be time to take it to a computer repair shop. ~*Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his Web site at www.edwards.com.*