

Trouble printing to a laptop



*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.*

QUESTION: I have a Toshiba laptop with Vista and a new Gateway using Windows 7 (64 bit). I am having trouble printing from the laptop on my network. The printer is set up for sharing and I can see the printer on my laptop. When I try to print a test page I get nothing. Any help would be appreciated.

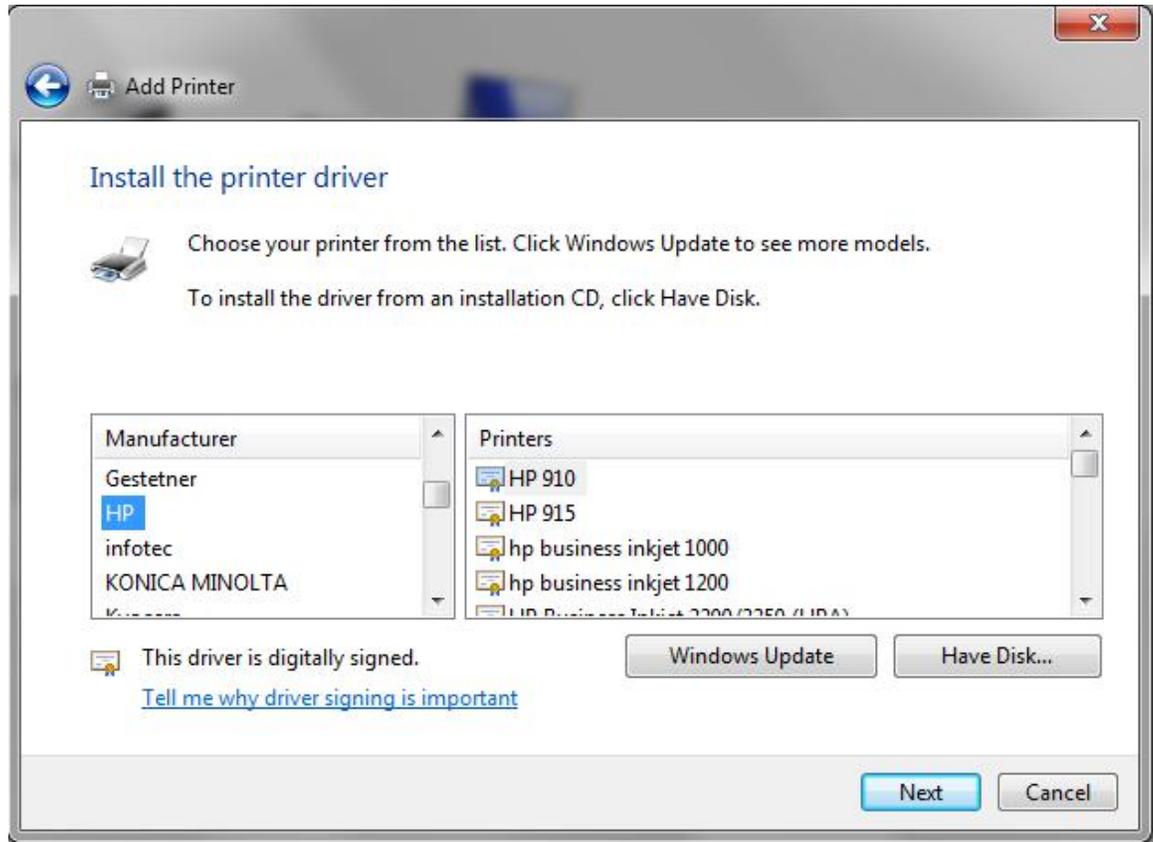
PC CLUB: I can't tell from your question how your printer is connected but I assume it's connected directly to a Gateway USB port. Before addressing your problem let's list the various ways to connect or install a printer:

- **Connect it directly to your PC through a USB cable.** The typical installation requires that you start the process with the printer disconnected, install the software that came with the printer and follow the on-screen directions.
- **Share a printer over a network.** This assumes you have a router and is best explained at <http://bit.ly/shareprinter> for Windows XP. For Windows 7, go to Devices and Printers and select Add a Printer and proceed as explained in the XP article. The Workgroup names should be the same on all PCs in the network and instructions for this can be seen at bit.ly/2DZiib. This method requires that the PC with the printer connected to it directly remain on during the time you want to share the printer.
- **Use a networked printer.** Recent printers, such as the Canon Pixma MX870, allow you to connect a printer to any PC that connects to your router either directly or wirelessly. The Canon can be setup to use either direct or wireless network connections but not simultaneously. The printer can also be connected to a PC through a USB cable but the PC doesn't have to remain on for the networked PCs to use it.
- **Share a printer with a router.** Several recent routers have a USB connection that allows you to connect a printer to it. Not all routers with a USB connection have this capability. The USB connection is frequently for hooking up an external hard drive. Only the PC that wants to print has to be on.
- **Use a print server.** This method is becoming less popular due to recent innovations in wireless printers and routers.

Here are several things that I've experienced:

- If you use a password to access your PC, sharing printers and files is easier, especially with Windows 7.
- With Windows 7 and often with earlier operating systems, Windows will have a built-in driver for a printer. This will provide basic printing functions but may not support all features of an All-in-One printer.

- If Windows 7 does not recognize a printer, you can still install it by going to Devices and Printers and selecting Add a Printer. Click the appropriate link in the next window and also choose a USB port. Remember which one you choose since you may have to try again with another port. In the next screen select your manufacturer on the left and model on the right and proceed from there.



- You can always try to download the latest driver from the manufacturer's Web site but older printers may not be supported.

Among the options listed above, I've found that using a printer with networking capability is the easiest if you want to print wirelessly. With the front panel of the Canon MX 870, for example, I just told it to connect to my wireless router and installed the printer on my laptop. This required two things: first, you need to know the security code to access your wireless router and second, you have to choose the Network option when you install the printer.

If you can see a printer and it still will not print, you may have to clear the print queue. Microsoft has an article on how to do this at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/946737>. Sometimes, out of desperation, you may have to uninstall and reinstall the printer. - Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his Web site at www.edwardns.com.

