Adobe℠ Customer Services

Troubleshooting PCL™ Printer Problems and Improving Printer Performance

This technical note offers solutions to problems you might encounter printing Portable Document Format (PDF) files from Windows versions of Acrobat Exchange and Acrobat Reader to PCL printers. This document also gives advice for improving your printer's performance with all applications.

Note: This technical note uses the term PCL printer to refer to the Hewlett-Packard LaserJet® family of printers, LaserJet printer clones, and any printer that can emulate a LaserJet printer.

TROUBLESHOOTING PRINTER PROBLEMS

This technical note gives advice for troubleshooting the following printer problems:

• The printer is not working at all

• You cannot print to a network printer

• A PCL printer prints only part of a page

• Characters fail to print or symbol characters print for letters on a LaserJet III family printer

• Pages with complex graphics or many fonts fail to print on a LaserJet IV family printer

• Outline text and text with special effects such as shadows and zooming print incorrectly on a PCL printer

• Text incorrectly prints on top of graphics and images (bitmaps) on a PCL printer

• Printed images (bitmaps) have a quilted, blocky look

YOUR PRINTER IS NOT WORKING AT ALL

Problem

You have installed the Adobe Acrobat software and can open and view PDF documents, but you cannot print. A number of problems can cause your printer to fail to print:

• The printer is not switched on

• The printer is not connected to your computer correctly

• The printer is not selected with the Printers dialog box (displayed from the Control Panel)

• For printers connected with a serial communications port, the printer setup does not match the Windows port setup. (For example, your printer is set up to operate at 1200 Baud and the Windows Port Baud Rate is set to 9600 Baud.)

- The printer driver settings do not match your printer's setup

- The printer is broken

Solution
Check for these problems in order, working down the list from top to bottom. Make sure the printer is switched on and the cable connecting the printer to the computer is securely fastened at both ends. Then carefully check the printer driver settings to make sure they match your printer's setup.

If you still have problems, carefully repeat the installation instructions in your printer documentation.

YOU CANNOT PRINT TO A NETWORK PRINTER

Problem
You try to print a document to a network printer but the document fails to print. Four problems can cause this failure:

- Your network is failing; nobody can print

- The printer is not switched on

- The printer is not connected to the network correctly

- Your Windows network setup is incorrect

Solution
Contact your network administrator for help solving these problems.

A PCL PRINTER PRINTS ONLY PART OF A PAGE

Problem
You try to print a document but one or more pages do not print completely; only part of the pages print. The problem is that the partially printed pages require more printer memory to print than is installed in your printer.

Solution
Purchase more memory for your printer.

CHARACTERS FAIL TO PRINT OR SYMBOL CHARACTERS PRINT FOR LETTERS ON A LASERJET III FAMILY PRINTER

Problem
You are using Windows version 3.1 with a LaserJet III family printer and you find that characters on printed pages are not the same as on displayed pages. Some characters on printed pages are missing or are printing incorrectly. For example, symbol characters print for letters. This problem is caused by the PCL printer driver that version 3.1 Windows installs for LaserJet III, IIID, IIIP, and IIISi printers.

Solution
Install and use a PCL printer driver that is based on the Universal Printer Driver, version 3.1.2. You can obtain these drivers from any of five sources:

• *Acrobat Exchange disks.* The Exchange product disks contain a directory called PCL5DRVR, which contains the updated drivers. See the file PRINTER.TXT in the PCL5DRVR directory for instructions on how to install the printer driver for your printer. You can open PRINTER.TXT with NotePad, Write, or any word processor.

• *CompuServe.* The updated printer driver files are available from the Microsoft Software Library on CompuServe. To obtain the updated driver files, connect to CompuServe, type GO MSL, and press Return to enter the Microsoft Software Library forum. Download the file named HPPCL5.EXE and copy the file to an empty floppy disk. Then, from the MS-DOS prompt, change to the floppy disk drive, enter HPPCL5, and press return. The printer driver files and a text file are extracted from the HPPCL5 file. The text file PRINTER.TXT contains instructions on how to install the printer driver for your printer. You can open PRINTER.TXT with NotePad, Write, or any word processor.

• *The Microsoft Bulletin Board.* The updated printer driver files are available from the Microsoft Bulletin Board. Set up your modem to use 8 data bits, 1 stop bit, and no parity before you call the Microsoft Bulletin Board. The Microsoft Bulletin Board supports 9600 baud modems. After you connect to the Bulletin Board, use the menus to download the file named HPPCL5.EXE. Then follow the instructions described above under CompuServe to extract the driver files and a text file from HPPCL5.EXE.

• *Microsoft.* Call Microsoft Corporation and ask the Microsoft service representative to send you the driver files on a floppy disk.

• *Hewlett-Packard.* Call Hewlett-Packard and ask the Hewlett-Packard service representative to send you the driver files on a floppy disk.

PAGES WITH COMPLEX GRAPHICS OR MANY FONTS FAIL TO PRINT ON LASERJET IV FAMILY PRINTER

Problem
You are using a LaserJet IV family printer and you find that pages with complex graphics or many fonts fail to print.

Solution
In the order listed, try these three things to correct the problem:

• Set up the printer to print in the raster mode

• Set up the printer to print at 300 dots-per-inch (dpi) instead of 600 dpi

• If the printer can operate as a PostScript language printer, set it up to operate as a PostScript language printer

To change the printer's setup, start Windows, double-click the Control Panel icon (which is usually in the Main program group), and double-click the Printers icon to open the Printers control panel. Select the LaserJet IV from the Installed Printers list and click Setup to display the LaserJet IV setup dialog box. You can use this dialog box to change the printer setup.

OUTLINE TEXT AND TEXT WITH SPECIAL EFFECTS SUCH AS SHADOWS AND ZOOMING PRINT INCORRECTLY ON A PCL PRINTER

Problem
You are using a PCL printer and you find that outlined text or text with special effects such as shadows and zooming print incorrectly.

Solution
Configure Adobe Type Manager (ATM) to print ATM fonts as graphics. To change the ATM setup, double-click the ATM icon, which is usually in the Main program group, to display the ATM control panel. Click the Print ATM fonts as graphics check box. Then click Exit to close the ATM control panel and return to the Program Manager.

TEXT INCORRECTLY PRINTS OVER GRAPHICS AND BITMAP IMAGES ON A PCL PRINTER

Problem
You are using a PCL printer and you find that graphic shapes that are supposed to print on top of text print beneath text instead.

Solution
Set up ATM to print ATM fonts as graphics. To change the ATM setup, double-click the ATM icon, which is usually in the Main program group to display the ATM control panel. Click the Print ATM fonts as graphics check box. Then click Exit to close the ATM control panel and return to the Program Manager.

PRINTED IMAGES (BITMAPS) HAVE A QUILTED, BLOCKY LOOK

Problem
Printed scanned photographic images or images created with a paint program appear quilted and blocky.

Solution
There is no solution to this problem. Photographic images can require a great deal of storage. To minimize the size of Acrobat documents, people who create the documents can choose to compress images. Compressing images reduces the file size of Acrobat documents but gives the images a quilted, blocky look.

IMPROVING PRINTER PERFORMANCE

You can make your printer print faster by taking any or all of the following steps:

• Purchase more printer memory. Have at least 4 megabytes (MB) of printer memory to print Acrobat documents.

• Increase the size of the ATM font cache. See the following section for instructions.

• Connect your printer to a parallel port on your computer.

To increase the size of the ATM font cache:

1 Start Windows (or quit all applications).

2 Double-click the ATM program icon. (The ATM program icon is usually in the Main program group.) The ATM control panel appears.

3 Click the up arrow in the Font Cache box to increase the amount of memory used for the ATM font cache. Add 64K for every Type 1 font that you use frequently. If your computer has more than 4 megabytes (MB) of memory and you use the Acrobat Exchange or Reader program frequently, Adobe recommends that you specify 1024K (1 MB) for the ATM font cache.

4 Click Exit to close the ATM control panel. A message appears prompting you to either restart Windows or return to the current Windows session.

5 Click Restart Windows to restart ATM with the new cache size.