

Common Problems

Data Communications is a very inexact field and is prone to an inordinate number of problems. So by alleviating some of the common problems reported with MicroLink I hope to make your lives a bit easier.

Modem does not work when port speed is set to 14400 - Well this is probably the most common problem reported. And the answer is simple, at least from the Microlink standpoint. Do not set your port speed to 14400. It turns out that most modems, including those 14400 modems, do not support 14400. If you have a 16550 UART then you need to set your port speed to 38400. In Windows the standard COM driver does not work well above 38400 and Receive Overruns will occur. If you do not have a 16550 UART or do not know what you have then set your port speed to 19200. You can use the Microsoft utility MSD.EXE included with your Windows system to determine the type of UART you have. The common ones are 8250, 16450, or 16550 so look for these numbers under the COM port section.

Receive Overruns are Occurring - Well this is the next most common problem that is reported. This is not as easy as the previous problem. The first thing is to read the previous problem on port speed settings.

If you have this set correctly the next most likely culprit is FLOW CONTROL. Flow control is set in the COM Driver and Flow Control is also set in the Modem. The Flow Control in the COM Driver is easy and we set that for you. But the Flow Control in the Modem is a lot more difficult because it turns out that there are numerous modems which implement the Flow Control command differently. Which means if your modem is not in the list then the chances are that your modem selection is not correct.

When this occurs you can either experiment with a different modem until you find one that works or contact us and we will help select the right modem or work at creating an entry for your modem. Currently all modem strings are embedded, but this will be changed for our next version.

Also you should be using Flow Control for all DATA communications over 2400 BPS or if you have V42 or MNP enabled in a slower modem. And it should be Hardware Flow Control (In our case RTS/CTS).

Certain Modems do not handle the speed we initialize them at effectively. They have a tendency to drop off commands at the end of the Command string (Usually the flow control setting). To overcome this problem we have a parameter called XMIT Delay in the Settings/Modem Dialog Box. Place a value of 1 in this box and the initialization and command sequence will slow down enough to satisfy your modem.

And one last instance occurs when you are dialing into MicroLink Host Mode or AutoAnswer Mode with a modem which does not have a V42 or MNP capabilities and the dialing modem is setup for V42 or MNP. The V42 and MNP sequences are actually data that is transmitted after a carrier/Connect sequence has take place. Well to a modem which does not support V42 or MNP this data looks like garbage and may result in Receive overruns or some other odd messages. The best thing to do in this situation is have the party dialing into MicroLink disable the MNP or V42 support for the duration of the call. Usually the negotiation of the V42 and MNP lasts about 1-3 seconds immediately after the first connect/carrier message.

Keyboard does not set Home, PGUP, Up Arrow, Etc Keys - The normal state for the control keys such as HOME, Up Arrow, Page UP, etc is to manipulate the screen buffer. If you desire to transmit the sequences to the service you are connected to you must toggle the scroll lock key to and ON position.

Screen Paints are Choppy - Well if you are comparing to DOS programs you will find the screen paints are slower and choppier with slower MicroComputers. This is because the Graphical Interface is much slower and has a more difficult time handling the Scrolling process without playing tricks in the repaint routines.

Screen Paints are aligned incorrectly - This is usually the result of the Terminal Number of Rows are out of Sync with the number of Rows on the service that you are using. If the number of rows on the BBS service you are using are set to 25 then make sure the setting in the Settings/Terminal Dialog Box is also 25. Usually there is a menu item on the service you are using for your settings or parameters.

Modem Initialization Error - My favorite error. Well this error is usually the result of an mismatch in our modem string and the Modem you are using. You can either try selecting another modem in the list and experimenting with this or you can contact us for help. Also if you have added any modem init strings to the Settings/Modem Dialog Box take them out. The Modems.dat file is a better way of setting your own modem strings. When adding an entry make sure all letters are the same case (Ex. UPPER CASE or lower case).

When using the User Init modem filed remeber to place and AT at the beginning. The CR is automatically added at the end.

ANSI Graphic Characters are not displayed Properly - If those special characters used to Jazz up the displays on BBS's are not displaying properly this is usually a result of the FONT selection. The only Font distributed with Windows that supports these characters is the Terminal FONT. Therefore if you select any other standard Windows Font you will not see these nice menus and pictures. Please note that the Terminal Font is not a True Type Font so if you have the True Type only enabled in the Window Control Panel Font Selection then you will not see

the Terminal Font.

Also note that we only support Fixed Space fonts for efficiency purposes. To properly space Proportional Fonts (Which most fonts unfortunately are) it becomes inefficient in a Windows Communications Environment.

When reporting problems please include the following items:

- A file containing your MSD.EXE
- A copy of your mlink.ini file

If you are having screen problems I will need a copy of a LOG file of the session you are having problems with or the phone number and access to the system you are having problems with.

I may also ask for a trace file. To start a trace start Microlink as follows from the DOS Prompt in the Mlink Directory:

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WIN MLINK *
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This will create a file called trace.fle. Perform the sequence in error and after the error occurs shut down Microlink and send the trace to us.

Information can be sent to us using the following methods:

- US Mail
- Upload to our Support BBS (404-410-9358)
- EMAIL to the CIS account for Stephen Leitner, 72510,1766

Well that should do it for now. Thanks.