PCI/ISA/PCMCIA to Serial: Printer (Scanner, Dongle, ...) installation or use in Windows fails with PCI parallel ports

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Description:

The PCI-parallel port installs without problems and error messages. Later a modern printer is installed at this port. Now there are a lot of error messages while printing to this device, e.g. claiming the cable is broken.

This problem is very good known, it also affects Scanner, Dongles and other devices.

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Technical background:

The printer driver attempts to get enhanced information from the printer, by reading data from the parallel port. Unfortunately the port driver of Windows does not support reading data. Please note the difference between the driver for the port and for the printer. So the printer driver uses its own routines to access the parallel port, bypassing the port driver.

To do this, the driver must have exact information about the hardware. LPT2 is only a name, neither an address nor an IRQ.

The setup programs of common printers fail to collect this information, instead it assumes classic values based on the name. With PCI these settings are dynamic, and are different to the parameters known from DOS. This is definitely an error in the printer software.

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Solution 1:

Please disable the bidirectional communication in the settings of the port and the printer. Then there will be no attempt to read data from the parallel port. No more error messages will appear.

If the bidirectional communication is not controlled directly, tell the printer driver installation software you plan to use a networked printer. Give the remote name as \\localhost\lptsim. Over the network bidirectional printing is not possible, so the installer will configure the classical unidirectional routines. After installation change the properties to use LPT2 (PCI card) as the port to print to.

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Solution 2:

The previous solution is not available for devices definitely require bidirectional operation. Then the software can run in a Virtual Machine. This VM will connect its internal LPT1/LPT2 (with classic hardware configuration) to the LPT2/3/4 on the PCI card of the host system. Software running inside the VM will not notice the new hardware, and probably operate fine. This is especially a good option for old software based on DOS or very old versions of Windows. Please note to have a separate license for the Operating System running inside the VM.

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