

Printing a DOS Based Program using a USB Port

RDA RESERVE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE™

prepared by

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The RDA RESERVE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE™ and other DOS programs, were designed by default to print directly to a printer using the LPT1 or parallel port common to older computers and printers. The simplest method for printing using the RDA program was to connect your computer to your printer using a parallel computer cable. Nothing further was required. Today, desktop computers and printers with parallel ports are increasingly obsolete. USB connections are the standard of the day.

This article is intended to describe how to set up your computer to print the RDA program and other DOS based programs using a USB port connection. The following steps are specifically outlined for the Windows XP operating system, however, although the menu selections will differ, these principles can be applied to other Windows operating systems such as VISTA and Windows 7.

Where to Start:

1. First we need to know the name assigned to your computer. This was likely done when you first set up your computer. This can be done by following the following steps:
 - Go to “My Computer” either by clicking the icon on your desktop or by clicking on the “Start” button and then the “My Computer” option.
 - Click on the “View System Information” option.
 - Click on the “Computer Name” tab. You will find information for the “Computer Description,” the “Full Computer Name,” and the name of your network “Workgroup.”
 - Write down the “Full Computer Name” for your computer and “Workgroup” exactly as indicated. If necessary, assign your computer a Description such as “My-Computer,” or “Office-Computer;” and a Name such as “HP-Notebook,” or “Gateway-1000” and click OK. *Note: Computer names should be alphanumeric with the first letter being an alphabetic character. Even though names can contain spaces, it is not recommended as it is more difficult to use operating system commands when spaces exist in the shared names.*
2. Next, we need to determine or assign name for the printer you will be printing to and “share” that printer.
 - Click on your computer’s “Start” button and go to the “Control Panel” option.
 - Select the “Printers and Other Hardware” option.
 - Click on “View installed printers or Fax printers.”

- Right click on the printer you wish to use for printing the RDA Reports.
 - Left click on “Properties.”
 - Click on the “Sharing” tab.
 - Click on the option to share the printer.
 - Note the name of your printer or assign a name of your choice. *Again, shared names should be alphanumeric with the first letter being an alphabetic character. Even though names can contain spaces, it is not recommended as it is more difficult to use operating system commands when spaces exist in the shared names.*
 - Click OK.
3. Next, we need to setup a “Network Connection” for your computer if one is not already established. If your computer is already on a network then you can skip this step. If it is not, even if you may not plan on networking your computer with other computers, we still need to set it up. Once your computer is setup for a network, we can’t “fake” the DOS based program into redirecting the normal output through the LPT1 port to the USB connection or any printer connection on the network.
- Again, using “Control Panel,” select the “Network and Internet Connections” option.
 - Select the “Setup or change your home office network” option.
 - This opens the network setup wizard. Follow all instructions until your “network” is setup.
 - a. Select the appropriate computer connection.
 - b. Enter the “Computer Description,” “Full Computer Name,” and “Workspace” name (MSHOME or other workspace name) when asked.
 - c. Be sure to turn on file and printer sharing!
 - d. Check and then apply all settings.
 - e. The next step discusses setting up the network settings on other computers on the network. You may click, “Just finish the wizard...” to finish.
4. Now we are set up and can tell the computer where to send the RDA program’s reports. All of the following commands must be done at the DOS prompt. Yes, with all the hoopla, Windows and XP are really DOS based programs themselves. They just have been given a better interface, look and appeal.
- To get to the DOS prompt, find this option by clicking first on the “Start” button, then “All Programs,” then “Accessories,” and finally, “Command Prompt.”
 - At the operating system prompt (C:\Directory Path> for example) type the following command and press enter:

```
net use Lpt1 \\ComputerName\PrinterName /Persistent:Yes
```

Net use is the network command and LPT1 is the port for which we want to re-direct the printing. ComputerName is the "Full Computer Name" of your computer and PrinterName is the "Name" of the printer on the network we are printing to. "/Persistent:Yes" tells the computer to execute this command every time the computer is rebooted or turned on. If your computer name or printer name contains spaces, they will need to be enclosed in quotation marks as in the following example:

```
net use Lpt1 \\“computer name”\“printer name” /Persistent:Yes
```

For those of you that are familiar with batch files, a batch file with this command line format is provided in the "net-use-sample.bat" file provided with the program for your use. The contents of the file contain the following lines for individual editing:

```
net use Lpt1 /delete
net use Lpt1 \\computername\printername /Persistent:Yes
pause
```

- To verify that the connection was successful type "net view \\ComputerName" without the quotes at the DOS prompt.
- To delete the LPT port connection, use the command: "net use Lpt1 /Delete" without the quotes.
- To exit the DOS prompt, simply type the word "Exit" and press return and you will return to windows.

Note: If you have set up your computer using Microsoft's "Virtual PC and Windows XP," you will need to complete step 4 in Windows XP. Also, for Windows VISTA or Windows 7, you may need to turn off the "Password Protection Sharing" setting located in the Advanced Sharing Options or other location before you complete step 4.

You should now be able to print all of the RDA reports without any problems.

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