

# Set Up Printer Sharing

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One of the benefits of a home or small business network is that you can print documents on a printer that is attached to another computer on your network. If you have just one high quality printer, for example, each network member can access that printer when printer-sharing privileges are set up.

There are two types of shared printers: network printers and local printers.

Network printers are connected directly to a network, usually to a device called a print server rather than to a particular computer.

Local printers, which you're more likely to use, are attached to a single computer on a network. By setting up printer sharing, you can share a local printer with the other computers on your network.

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## Setting up printer sharing

You can set up printer sharing when you first set up your network, any time after your network is set up, or when you install a new printer on a networked computer.

Before networked computers can share a printer, they must belong to the same workgroup. A workgroup is simply a group of computers that can share files, folders, and printers over a network. A workgroup operates over a network, but is not the same thing as a network. For more information about workgroups, see [Set Up a Workgroup](#).

As you are setting up your network for the first time, you can use the Microsoft® Broadband Networking Setup Wizard to help you establish or join a workgroup and set up both printer sharing and file sharing.

If you have already set up a network, the Microsoft Windows® Network Setup Wizard can guide you through setting up and joining a workgroup.

## Sharing the printer

After you have added a computer to a workgroup, you can share any printers that are connected to it. To share a printer, open the **Printers** control panel by clicking **Start**, pointing to **Settings** (in some operating systems), and then clicking **Printers** (or **Printers and Faxes**). Click the printer you want to share, and on the **File** menu, click **Sharing**, or click **Properties** and then click the **Sharing** tab. In the **Sharing** dialog box, choose to share or not to share the printer.

You can also share new printers that you install on any of your networked computers. If the Add Printer Wizard detects that your computer is on a network, it will give you the option to share the printer you are installing.

## Enabling Windows File and Printer Sharing

If you cannot access the Sharing option, or if you see a message stating that file and printer sharing is not turned on, you must enable the File and Printer Sharing component in Windows. Doing so differs from choosing to share files or printers on individual computers. You can have Windows File and Printer Sharing enabled, but still not be sharing any files or printers. However, you must have Windows File and Printer Sharing enabled before you can share any files or printers.

You can enable Windows File and Printer Sharing in Windows XP through the **Properties** page for your network connection. In other Windows operating systems, you can use the Network control panel. For more information and instructions, see Windows Help.

## Naming a shared printer

When you choose to share a printer, you'll assign it a name in the Sharing dialog box to identify it to the entire workgroup. The name should be different from any other device name in the workgroup, and should not be the same as the workgroup name. You will probably want to name the printer something — its location or manufacturer, for example — that helps you to easily identify it.

The shared printer name does not have to be the same name you gave the printer when you first installed it, although it can be. If you give the printer a new share name, you will see both the original, local name and the new share name listed in the printer name drop-down box when you choose **Print** from this computer. It makes no difference which name you choose to print to. The other computers in the

workgroup will be able to see and choose only the printer's share name.

**Note** Computers that are not running Windows XP might not be able to recognize long printer names or those containing spaces or special characters. To avoid problems, ensure that the printer name contains fewer than 31 characters and does not contain any spaces or special characters.

#### **Setting up other computers to use a shared printer**

To use a shared printer, each computer must use the drivers for its own operating system. You can install the printer drivers by using **Add Printers** in the **Printers** control panel to install the printer on every computer that is going to use it. Install the printer as you would install any other printer, but select **A network printer, or a printer that is attached to another computer**. You can then browse to the shared printer, provided that it and the computer it is attached to are turned on and accessible on the network, and then complete the installation.

On computers running Windows XP and Windows 2000, you can also install the drivers for other operating systems when you first share the printer. To do so, click **Additional Drivers** in the **Sharing** dialog box. You do not need to install the drivers in the other computers.

After the shared printer is set up, you can print to it from any of the computers in the workgroup exactly as you would print to a local printer.