

HP OfficeJet and Linux -- a mini HOW-TO / short-story.

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- *From:* "Nathan Moschkin" <ironywrit@xxxxxxxxxxx>
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There isn't, exactly, an easy way to go about doing this, from what I've experienced when installing an OfficeJet... But it IS possible.

But first, a very personal introduction of how this all came about:

Imagine a dilemma of many facets of the human condition:

We have 5 computers in the house. 2 laptops running various flavors of XP. 2 desktops running XP Pro, each... and then this sad little Linux box, devoid of all purpose... it was once my pop's machine, but the XP drive got corrupted some how. ... It was to be the reincarnation of my last Linux box from when we had a cable modem... which I built out of a 2.0.x kernel on a 200 mhz system with multi-homed configuration. ...

....a Debian Linux box, which since we got FiOS 15MB service, simply cannot keep up; it can't really handle the bandwidth with two measly 100MB cards on a 2.4 ghz system. So we bought a wireless router (top of the line, firewall, echo-concentration reception, everything)... and just decided to use that for our internet connection.

Now, my mother has a b/w laser printer (yes I am currently living with my mother: it's a long story; hopefully, I won't be here for long... except that she's been through some turmoil with pops, and my brothers are both having their lives so I figure: hey; rent's cheap, she needs assistance...)

The b/w laser's installed on the far corner office desktop XP (her work-at-home PC), and we can usually print from that as long as she's not hooked up to the IP-Tunnel software her company gave her so that she could work from home.

But then, one day, in the midst of all this worldly drama, she had to contend with insurance inspectors because she is fighting with the bank to release the rest of her insurance claim money from the aftermath of hurricans Charley, Francis, Ivan and Jeanne (welcome to Tampa Bay)... So, she needed to print off color photographs for the insurance company.

Well... Our color printer was attached to an outdated Debian box... a

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/stable version, if you will, that didn't support all the great things that the new version supported, including hplip. So... after a brief inspection noting that the XP partition on the Linux box had become irreperably damaged, somehow... I reformatted the entire thing...

--- what happened next was sheer determination.

I managed the excessively complicated feat of getting Debian Linux /unstable version to install from a /stable CD-ROM network distribution (xorg/X11, Gnome, KDE, all that)... then, I got the Debian system to share (to a network of Windows systems) a printer... but not just any printer, a high-quality photo-realistic color printer and multi-function fax/scanner... the HP Deskjet 6210, and I got the Windows systems to use their own drivers and I can print photo-quality from anywhere in my house. I also threw in a 35 gigabyte share file for my mom to offload some stuff onto.

Now we have five complete systems. 2 desktop XPs, 2 laptop XPs and a desktop Linux box (built out of a Compaq 2.4 ghz factory PC).

Oh, get this: I downloaded the entire 980 MB install package in 15 minutes. Average throughput? 1920 kBytes/s.

That's my T1 / FiOS connection. I was wondering if I was ever really getting that speed because Windows throttles back what it receives at one time. so I can start with an 800 kB/s burst but by the end of the download it's dwindled to like 200. But not on Linux, it pulls the whole bandwidth.

A friend from school, told me to disable QoS service, and I did get much better throughput, afterward, but NOTHING like I get from my Linux box.

But, Windows does it per-socket, so if I have 18 downloads going, they all pull at about 100-200 kBytes/s . at once, so I know that's taking advantage of my true bandwidth. But it sure would be nice to be able to download and install the FireFox updates in 1 second like I can on Linux instead of 2 minutes on XP.

After tweaking and re-installing several things (big bugs in the current version: XFCE doesn't install properly, several libraries are missing, defoma scripts have errors), I finally got my system up.

I accessed CUPS web-administration ... chose the 6200 series driver (foomatic)... (don't install hpoj, ever)... I used foomatic-gui to check and configure the printer, afterward... only big problem I see is that KDE doesn't recognize the CUPS system that is running.

But after I had gotten through all that with a combination of GNOME and KDE

tools, and had printed a test page (in color), I decided the easiest route, for sharing was to log into KDE and select Settings->Internet - Networking->Samba.

I became the super user, and edited all of the pertinent information (HINT: do NOT select "Share All Printers" it won't work).

.... The big problem was getting the Windows XP systems to use the correct drivers. It wouldn't take the 6200 series install disk drivers and add them.

What we did is we installed all the drivers onto an XP machine... in this case it happened to be a laptop machine, which made it inconvenient for us to share the printer from that machine... and then we shared that printer and connected to it from every other machine in the house to download the correct drivers.

Then, when we connected to the printer from the Linux Box, we selected bogus drivers (I chose the standard HP Officejet driver), and then, once the printer was connected, we went into Control Panel -> Printers and Faxes... selected the printer, right-clicked on it, selected Properties, went to Advanced tab, and where it asks for a driver, we clicked down and selected the appropriate one.

It took a surprisingly long amount of time for everything to decide what to do, after that (15 seconds)... but then it was fully recognized, and we were able to print test-pages in full color, at full quality from the XP boxes.

I know there's a way for the drivers to be there and readily available for download from the Linux box, but I didn't exactly know where they were all supposed to go, or exactly which files to copy, and this was the quickest way to the solution. No one has yet documented the drivers-directory for use with Linux vis a vis the HP Officejet.