



# 1-Minute Newsletter – Jul/Aug 2014

This is another installation of our 1-Minute Newsletter – we hope you find it helpful!

## Shared Printers/Network Printing

POS users often run into printer configuration and assignment issues, especially when Windows is set into full network discovery mode and it automatically installs a new printer here and there that you don't even plan to use from that computer. This causes windows to reorganize your printers and suddenly, an application that was assigned to use a certain printer doesn't work anymore. There's a pretty easy solution to this.

The printer should be installed as a shared, network printer on the main server. During installation, the printer name should also begin with a number, such as: 01-MainLaser, 02-ColorLaser, 03-Kitchen-HOT, 04- Kitchen-COLD, etc. If Windows ever reorganizes the printers, it will do so by name and they'll always be listed in the correct order because the name starts with numbers – the list won't be affected by spelling or the addition of new devices such as "Epson Receipt Printer." Secondly, they should be shared on the network using the same names instead of "Toms Printer" or "Mary's desk." What happens if Tom and Mary switched desks, or if they both left for other employment? See the confusion poor printer naming can create?

This is especially important with IP-addressed printers where the printer itself has a network address. It's much simpler to set up the addressing one time on the server, *and then* share the printer. At the registers, you simple "use" the server's shared printer and the IP addressing is taken care of for you. If you do it otherwise, you must set up the IP addressing on every POS register. Which sounds easier to you, setting it up once or multiple times?

If you would like help with setting up your printers for easier and more consistent operation, give us a call!

## Network Mapping

The process of connecting computer A to a shared resource on computer B is called "network mapping." You are making an electrical roadway from your computer to the other computer's resource, i.e. a makeshift "map", and you're doing that by using the built-in networking capability of the operating system, which is likely to be Windows. Things to know:

- You can only connect to resources that are "shared." If they're not shared, you likely won't even be able to see them from your computer.
- You can only connect to resources that your user permissions allow you to use. In other words, it's possible to see a shared resource but if you haven't been given the rights to use it, you can't get to it.
- If you have access to the resource you may be able to read the information only, or you may have been given high enough access credentials to make changes to it, or even delete it. It completely depends on how the item has been shared and who has been given permission to use it.
- There's a difference between network mapping via "universal network connections" (UNC) and "drive letter" connections. UNC connections happen when you open "Network Places," look around and find a shared resource such as a document, find the item you're looking for and open it directly. "Drive letter" connections are where you find the resource you want and choose "map network drive" from your computer to that resource. Then your computer looks at that resource as if it was just another hard disk installed in your computer. What's important to know is that while in your mind you may not think there's a difference, but to your computer, it really, *really* does. UNC provides for a limitless and free way to use resources with few restrictions. Drive letters are reserved locations because alphabetically, there are only 26 possible drive letters, A through Z. And some of those are already reserved, such as drive C:, which is your computer's local hard disk drive.
- Some applications, such as Club Office, SQLPos POS, TimeClock, etc. require drive letter mapping for proper operation because their designs involve some complex situations and the software needs to know physically where specific data files are – it can't just go "look" for them in an arbitrary, willy-nilly fashion. You'll often find this of database-type applications. Other applications such as your word processor or spreadsheet don't often have such specific interconnectivity requirements and can use either method.

Well, now perhaps you know a few things that you didn't know before and why we do them. See you next time...

*Topics for future issues...*  
Cloning Registers, FTP ideas, the "Cloud," more...