iCAFE - Configure Docket Printers

Introduction

Docket Printing to Kitchen and the Bar is one of the main features of iPOS. Without the printing the efficiency of the kitchen will drop dramatically. There are a number things you can do to give the printers the best chance of servicing the kitchen to peak efficiency.

Simple Maintenance

Keep the Printer Clean. Kitchens are a dangerous environment for printers. While they are built tough, oil, food, salt & grease will kill your printer very quickly. After every shift make sure the printer is included in the cleaning roster. Clean both the outside of the printer and the inside. Remove the paper (and ribbons) shake out the loose paper scraps. Small pieces of paper and or food can settle between switches and sensors stopping the printer from working.

*_Keep away from the Heat Lamps._

Before each shift make sure that the printer has enough paper. Changing the paper before the shift starts means you won't be changing paper in the middle of the rush. Use the smaller rolls for the quiet times between lunch & dinner, or early week lunches.

If you are using a Dot Matrix Printer, then please change the ribbon regularly. A new ribbon not only makes the print easy to read but it reduces the chance of an old ribbon splitting and bending the points on the print head, which makes for an expensive repair.

Windows Configuration

This section of the document is to be used to check if your printer is set to correctly handle the flow of information from the iPOS server. Dot Matrix printers are slower to print then they can communicate with the server, Thermal printers are much faster and can keep up with the server. Both printers however can improve reliability by making sure that the Flow Control is correctly configured for this printer.

Flow Control is the way in which the server and the printer will agree to talk to each other. When a printer has no flow control the server is just spitting the docket at the printer and not listening for any feedback, if the printer can't keep up then parts will get missed. The longer the docket the more noticeable this will be.

While all kitchen/bar printers should have some sort of flow control turned on there are some exceptions.

Flow Control only applies to Serial Printers. If you have Parallel, USB or Network Printers, Flow Control does not apply.

Checking Existing Settings

To check the settings of your printer do the following:
Turn the printer off.
Hold down the Feed Button.
Turn the printer on.
It will start to print out a sheet with its settings on it, once it has started to print you can release the Feed Button.
After it has printed the page turn the printer off and back on again to come back to normal.

The print will be different for different model printers. You are looking for a section that will show the following items:-

```
Baud Rate: 9600
Stop Bits : 1
Parity : N
Flow Control : DTS/RTS
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If you're in any doubt, contact the Help Desk.

To check the windows settings do the following:

On the server (on computer which the kitchen printer is plugged into)
Click Start > Settings > Control Panel > Printers & Faxes.
Right Click on the Kitchen Printer
Select Properties.
Click on Ports Tab
The tick should be on COM Port, (COM1-COM10)
if it is different then it is not a serial printer and flow control does not apply.
Click the Configure Port button
Check that **Flow Control** is not set to **None**

If you're in any doubt contact the Help Desk.

To check that windows will hold dockets when there is a problem with the printer do the following:

On the server (on computer which the kitchen printer is plugged into)
Click Start > Settings > Control Panel > Printers & Faxes.
Right Click on the Kitchen Printer
Select Properties.
Click Print Test Page
A page should print
Turn the printer off
Click Print Test Page
The server should now display an error message in the printing.
The data in this test page will now be stored until the printer is turned back on and printing is told to resume.

Changing Existing Settings

CAUTION: *Making changes to the settings of either windows or the printer can cause your system to malfunction if the settings are incorrectly made. We strongly advise that this is NOT done immediately before a service period and should be done under Help Desk supervision.*

If Flow Control is set and the printer passed the test above then there is nothing for you to change.

If Flow Control is set to None in Windows then you can experiment with either of the other 2 settings to see what works best for your printer.

CAUTION: *Flow Control in Windows uses None, Hardware, or Xon/Xoff. On the Printers they use different language for the same settings. You may see Hardware, Software, DTS/RTS, Xon/Xoff, None, Nil, Null. To get matching values might mean some experimentation to see what works.*

CAUTION: *For flow control to work, your printer must be set to use Flow Control and your cabling must be capable of supporting the extra wires needed for flow control to work. Some stores using older equipment may not have this support in the printer or cables.*

If your printer does not have Flow Control set then this may have to be changed by altering the position of Dip Switches in the printer itself.

CAUTION: *The location of and which Dip Switch to set will vary from printer to printer. The Help Desk can help if you provide the model of the printer.*

CAUTION: *Do not alter the position of Dip Switches while the printer is turned on. It must be turned OFF to change settings.*
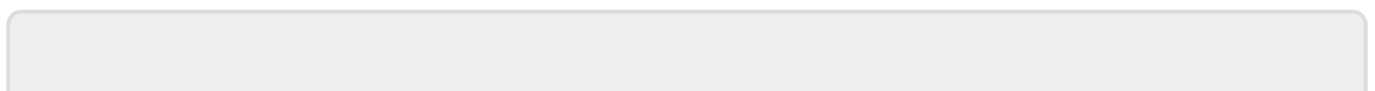
Final Notes

Making sure that you have the best values for flow control set on your printer will ensure that your printer can communicate clearly and efficiently with the server. It will reduce the chances of lost and/or scrambled dockets and provide some measure of fail safe if the printer is turned off.

Flow control stores unprinted dockets on the server, ready to print when the printer comes back online.

Windows does NOT support the automatic switching of dockets to the bar if the kitchen printer fails.

This is why it is important to complete the maintenance tasks to reduce the chances of failure.

You will notice that this page contains a lot of cautions, which is because of the delicate nature of the settings in the system. It is strongly advised that you do not attempt this by yourself, but please use the Help Desk to check the settings with your help.