

The Printing HOWTO



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The Printing HOWTO

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This is the Printing HOWTO, a collection of information on how to generate, preview, print and fax anything under GNU/Linux. Almost everything applies equally well to free software users using other Unixlike operating systems.

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1. Introduction

The Printing HOWTO should contain everything you need to know to help you set up printing services on your GNU/Linux box(en). As life would have it, it's a bit more complicated than in the point-and-click world of Microsoft and Apple, but it's also a bit more flexible and certainly easier to administer for large LANs.

This document is structured so that most people will only need to read the first half or so. Most of the more obscure and situation-dependent information in here is in the last half, and can be easily located in the Table of Contents, whereas some information through section 10 or 11 is probably needed by most people.

If you find this document or the LinuxPrinting.org website useful, consider buying something (ink, for example) through the referral links on the site; such purchases support this effort.

Since version 3.x was a complete rewrite, some information from previous editions has been lost. This is by design, as the previous HOWTOs were so large as to be 60 typeset pages, and had the narrative flow of a dead turtle. If you do not find your answers here, you are encouraged to a) look on the [LinuxPrinting.org website](http://LinuxPrinting.org) and b) drop me a note saying what ought to be here but isn't.

The [LinuxPrinting.org website](http://LinuxPrinting.org) is a good place to find the latest version; it is also, of course, distributed from Metalab (metalab.unc.edu) and your friendly local LDP mirror.

1.1. Terminology

I try to use consistent terminology throughout this document, so that users of all free Unixlike systems, and even users of non-Unixlike free software, can benefit. Unfortunately, there are many handy ambiguous names and many awkward unambiguous names, so just to be clear, here's a quick glossary of what each name means:

Unix

Unix is an operating system constructed at Bell Labs by various researchers. A variety of operating systems, mostly commercial, are based on this code and are also included in the name Unix.

*Un*x*

Un*x is an awkward word used to refer to every Unixlike operating system. A Unixlike operating system provides something similar to a POSIX programming interface as its native API. GNU/Linux, FreeBSD, Solaris, AIX, and even special-purpose systems like Lynx and QNX are all Un*x.

Linux

Linux is a Unixlike kernel and a small assortment of peripheral software written by Linus Torvalds and hundreds of other programmers. It forms the foundation of the most widely used Un*x operating system.

GNU

The GNU (GNU's Not Unix) project is a longtime development effort to produce an entirely free Unixlike operating system. The GNU Project is in many ways the father of most modern free software efforts.

GNU/Linux

A GNU/Linux operating system is a complete system comprised of the Linux kernel, its peripheral programs, and the GNU runtime environment of libraries, utilities, enduser software, etc. Red Hat, Debian, Caldera, SuSE, TurboLinux, and similar companies are all commercial vendors of complete GNU/Linux systems.

1.2. History

This is the fourth generation of the Printing HOWTO. The history of the PHT may be chronicled thusly:

1. I wrote the printing-howto in 1992 in response to all the printing questions in comp.os.linux, and posted it. This predated the HOWTO project by a few months and was the first FAQlet called a 'howto'. This edition was in plain ascii.
2. After joining the HOWTO project, the Printing-HOWTO was merged with an Lpd FAQ by Brian McCauley <B.A.McCauley@bham.ac.uk>; we continued to co-author the PHT for two years or so. At some point we incorporated the work of Karl Auer <Karl.Auer@anu.edu.au>. This generation of the PHT was in TeXinfo, and available in PS, HTML, Ascii, and Info.
3. After letting the PHT rot and decay for over a year, and an unsuccessful attempt at getting someone else to maintain it, this rewrite happened. This generation of the PHT is written in SGML using the LinuxDoc DTD and the SGML-Tools-1 package. Beginning with version 3.27, it incorporated a summary of a companion printer support database; before 3.27 there was never a printer compatibility list in this HOWTO (!).
4. In mid-January, 2000, I found out about the PDQ print "spooler". PDQ provides a printing mechanism so much better than lpd ever did that I spent several hours playing with it, rewrote parts of this HOWTO, and bumped the version number of the document to 4.
5. In mid-2000, I moved my printing website to www.linuxprinting.org, and began offering more powerful configuration tools there. I also converted the HOWTO to DocBook, and initiated coverage of CUPS, LPRng, and GPR/libppd.



6. In early 2001, I began using the GNU Free Documentation License, which seems quite suitable. I also began an effort to clarify what is and isn't Linux-specific; there are several free Unixlike kernels out there, and they all use the same printing software.

1.3. Copyright

Copyright (c) 1992–2001 Grant Taylor.

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2. Quick Start

The quickest way to get started is simply to use the setup tools provided by your vendor. Assuming that this includes support for your driver, and assuming that your vendor shipped the driver for your printer, then it should be easy to get a basic setup going this way. For information on vendor-provided setup tools, see [Section 9](#).

If your vendor's tool doesn't work out, you should figure out if your printer is supposed to work at all. Consult the printer compatibility listings in [Section 5.3.1](#) as well as the online version described there.

If your printer is known to work with a driver, check that you have that driver, and install if it not. Typically you will be able to find a contributed Ghostscript package including newer Ghostscript code and assorted third-party drivers. If not, you can compile it yourself; the process is not trivial, but it is well documented. See [Section 10](#) for more information on Ghostscript.

After installing the proper driver, attempt again to configure your printer with your vendor's tools. If that fails, select a suitable third party tool from those described in [Section 8](#). If that also fails, you'll need to construct your own setup; again see [Section 8](#).

If you're still stuck, you've got a little troubleshooting to do. It's probably best to read most of this document first to get a feel for how things are supposed to work; then you'll be in a better position to debug.

2.1. Where to Get Help

The Usenet newsgroups `comp.os.linux.hardware`, `comp.os.linux.setup`, and `comp.periphs.printers` all have a share of general printing questions. These are well-trafficked newsgroups where an answer is sure to be found; check in the Deja.com archives, too. I also run my own set of `linuxprinting.foo` newsgroups; these are available both as web-based forums and via NNTP; see the website.

Please also poke around the web looking for your answers. LinuxPrinting.org is an excellent place to start; other websites and projects are linked to from there. I get many emails for which the answer can be found on my site or in the printer vendor's documentation.

If you need more help, please try newsgroups, mailing lists, your distribution's support line, and so forth before asking me. While I do try to answer all the email I get, the fact is that I was unable to answer nearly 10% of the email I received last year. Things will be worse in the future. If do contact me, please do so via the discussion forums on LinuxPrinting.org; this will give others a chance to respond, and will archive your problem and any solution publicly for the next hapless user.

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3. How to print

You actually use a different command to print depending on which spooling software you use.

3.1. With PDQ

Most systems today ship with lpd, so this section won't apply. That said, I now recommend that people install and use CUPS or PDQ in most cases instead of (or in addition to) lpd. PDQ is perhaps the easiest to understand and use, while CUPS is among the more powerful systems, with perhaps the best user experience. Both feature much better support for printer options and interesting configurations than LPD.

With PDQ, instead of the lpr command, you use the command `pdq` or `xpdq`. Both work much like the traditional lpr in that they will print the files you specify, or stdin if no files are given.

3.1.1. Xpdq

Xpdq is an X Windows application that shows a list of available printers and a summary of the print queue (including current and historical jobs). There are two options under the File menu, one to print specific files, and one to print stdin. You can set whatever options are defined in your printer driver from the Driver Options dialog; typically there will be duplex, resolution, paper type and size settings, and so forth.

3.1.2. Pdq

The PDQ system's command-line printing command is simply called `pdq`. It can be used in place of the lpr command in most situations; it accepts the `-P` printer specification argument. Like lpr, it prints either the listed file(s) or stdin.

Printer options can be controlled with the `-o` and `-a` options.

3.2. With LPD and the lpr command

If you've already got lpd setup to print to your printer, or your system administrator already did so, or your vendor did so for you, then all you need to do is learn how to use the lpr command. The [Printing Usage HOWTO](#) covers this, and a few other queue manipulation commands you should probably know. Or just read the lpr(1) man page.

In a nutshell, you specify the queue name with `-P`, and specify a filename to print a file, or nothing to print from stdin. Driver options are traditionally not controllable from lpr, but various systems accept certain options with `-o`, `-Z`, or `-J`.

3.3. GUI Printing Tools

Most spooling systems alone offer only a rather basic command-line interface. Rather than use `lpr` directly, you may wish to obtain and use a front-end interface. These generally let you fiddle with various printing options (the printer, paper types, collation, n-up, etc) in an easy-to-use graphical way. Some may have other features, as well.

3.3.1. GPR

[GPR](#), by Thomas Hubbell, uses code from CUPS to filter Postscript jobs and offer easy user control over job options. Some options (like n-way printing, page selection, etc) are implemented directly by GPR, while most others are implemented by the printer or by the spooler's filter system.

GPR works with LPD or LPRng; or can be compiled specifically for use with VA Linux's modified LPD. When compiled normally, it uses VA's libppd directly to produce printer-specific PostScript which it will then submit to the lpr command. When compiled for VA's LPD, it will submit your unmodified job PostScript to the lpr command, along with the set of job options you specify. This is arguably the better route, since it allows the Postscript to be redirected to a different printer by the spooler when appropriate; unfortunately it requires VA's special LPD, which is not in wide circulation yet (although it is of course trivial to install).

To use GPR, first select a printer (by LPD queue name) and check that GPR has loaded the proper PPD file. If it hasn't, you'll need to specify the PPD filename, and specify your printer's options in the Printer Configuration dialog (you get this dialog by pressing the Printer Configuration button; it contains assorted printer setup options defined by the PPD).

Once you've configured your printer in GPR, you can print jobs by specifying the filename and selecting the proper options from the 'Common' and 'Advanced' tabbed panels. The 'Common' options are implemented directly by GPR for all



printers, while the 'Advanced' options are defined by the PPD file for your printer. You can see these option panels in [Figure 2](#) and [Figure 3](#).

Figure 1. GPR Main Options

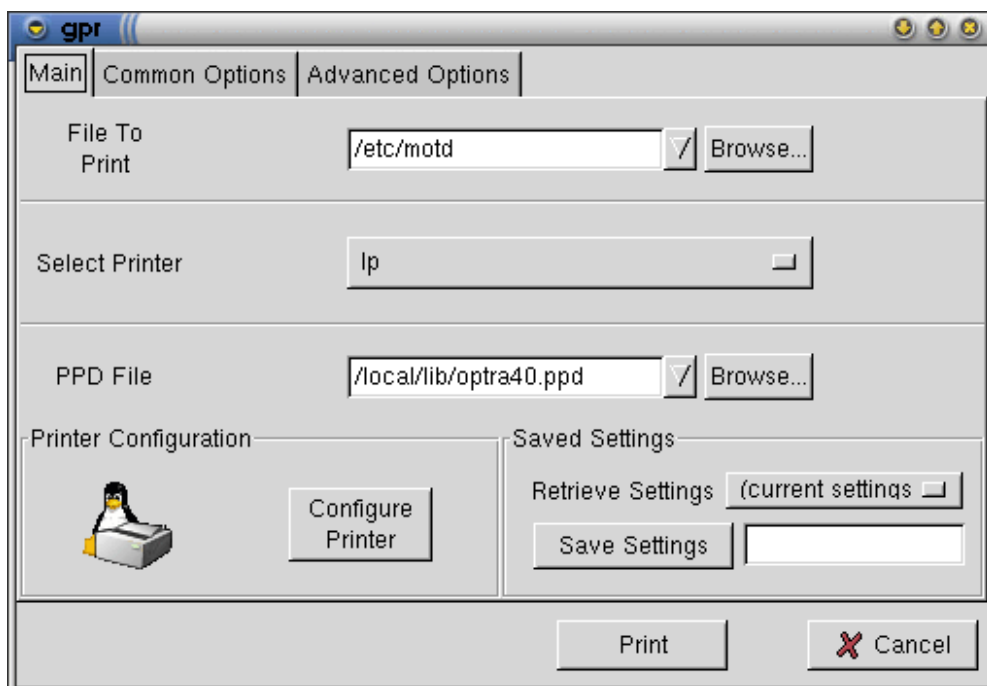


Figure 2. GPR Common Options

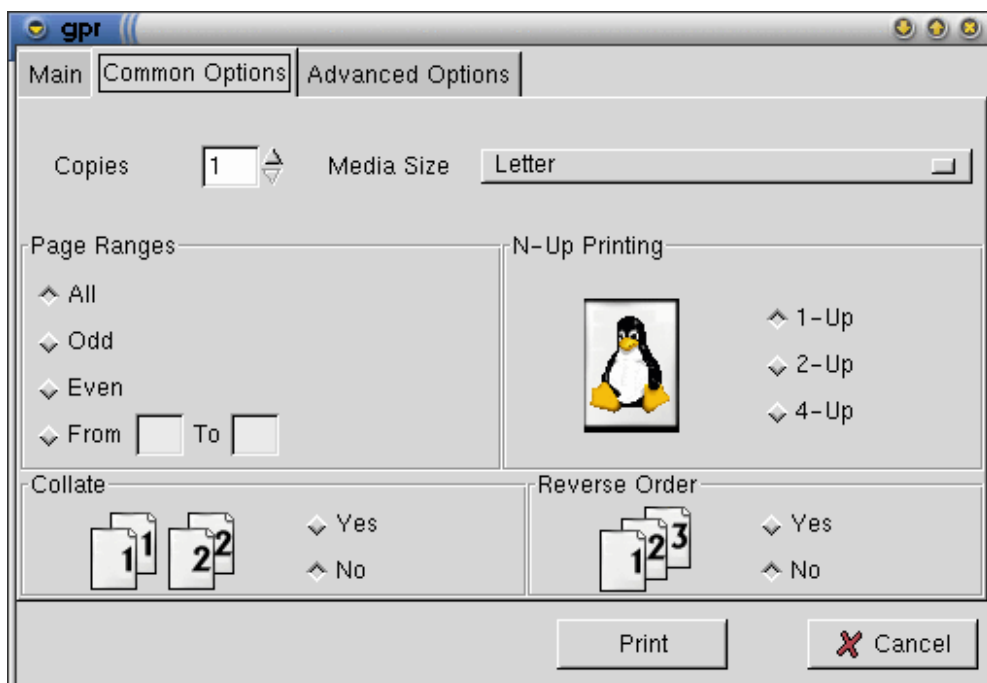
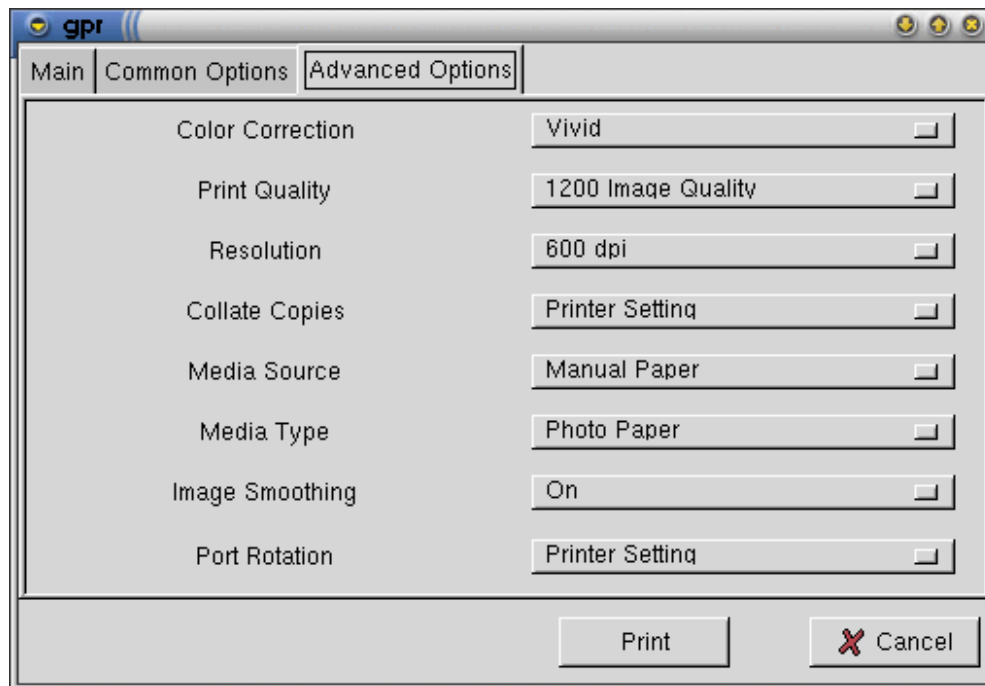


Figure 3. GPR Printer Options

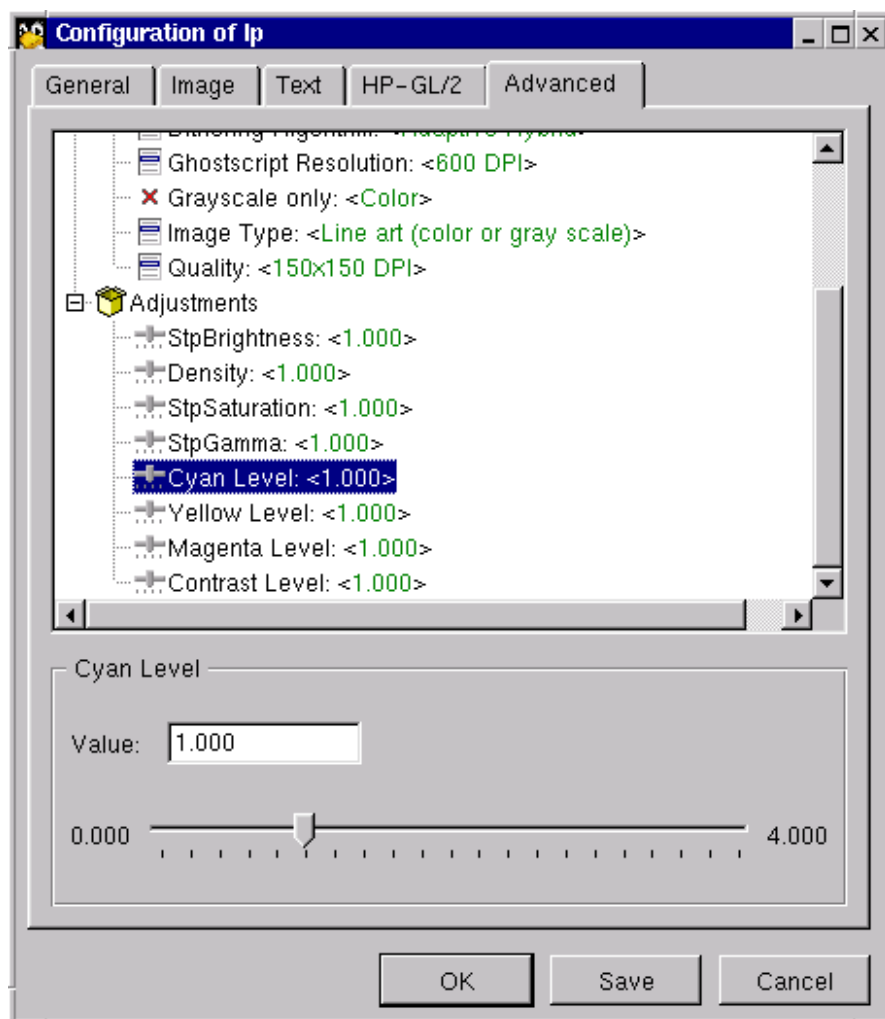


3.3.2. QtCUPS

If you use CUPS and KDE, you should probably also use QtCUPS, an attractive GUI front end for CUPS printing. It comes with a library that provides for tight integration into the KDE environment; KDE developers can make a one-line change to support CUPS printing via QtCUPS.

Like XPP, QtCUPS recently added explicit numeric option support for Foomatic, so free drivers used under CUPS with Foomatic will be fully controllable from the GUI.

Figure 4. QtCUPS Printer Options



3.3.3. XPP

Another good choice for CUPS is the program **XPP** (see [Figure 5](#)). XPP is built from the FLTK library and is therefore desktop agnostic.

To print with XPP, simply run the xpp program, and specify a file (or nothing, if you're using xpp in place of lpr to print from stdin). Then select a printer from the list of configured printers, and select any options you'd like to apply from the various tabbed panels. See [Figure 6](#) for an example options panel highlighting the standard CUPS options.

When used with my own Foomatic driver interface system, XPP will also let you control numeric parameters not normally supported by CUPS. This typically includes such things as extended color tuning, cartridge alignment, and so forth. See [Figure 7](#) for an example of this.

You can save your selected printer and all the options with the 'Save Settings' button.

Figure 5. XPP Main Window

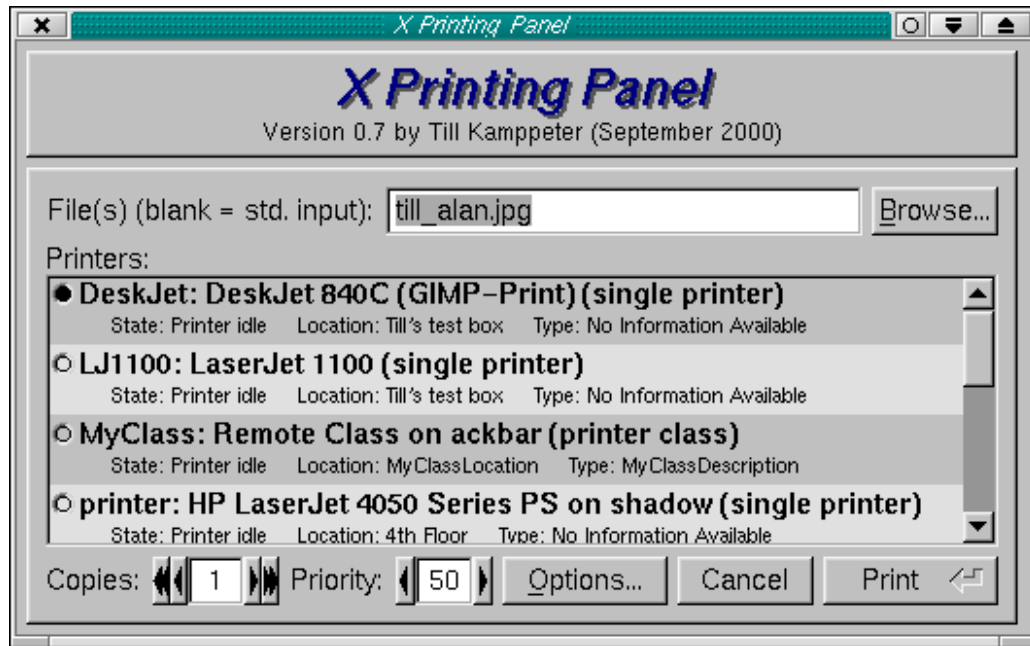


Figure 6. CUPS/XPP Options Window

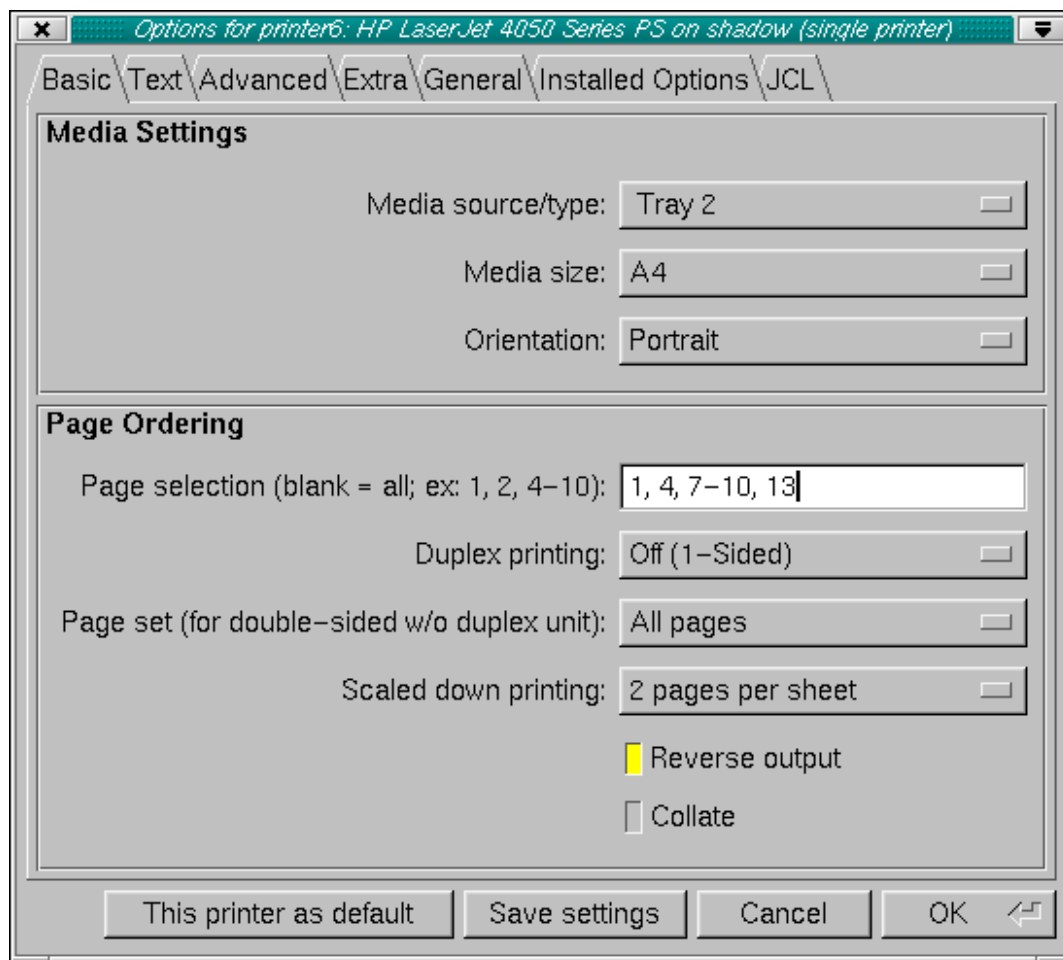
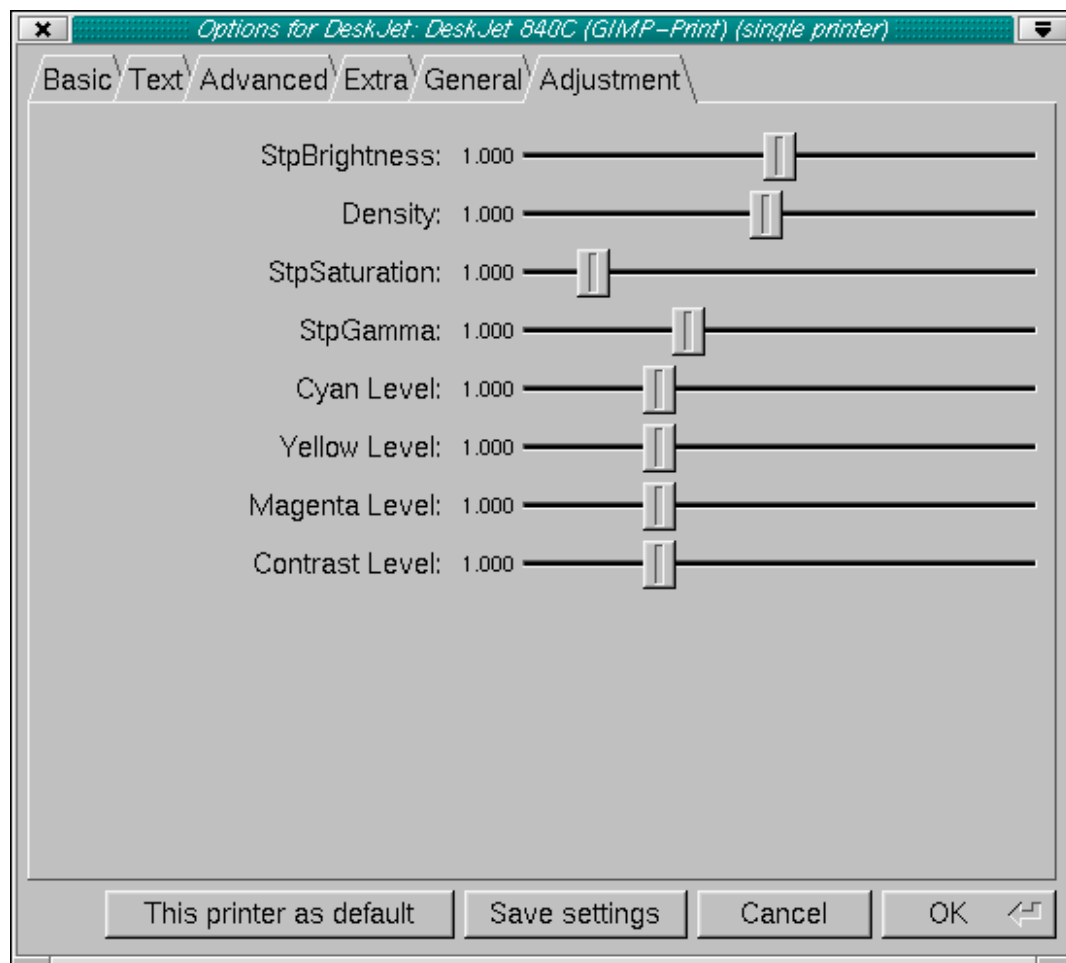


Figure 7. CUPS/XPP Foomatic Options Window



3.3.4. XPDQ

PDQ can be easily configured to print to queues controlled by most spooling systems, and PDQ's configuration syntax offers a very easy way to define arbitrary filtering and user options for print jobs. So you can thus use **xpdq** as a front-end to LPD printing with great success.

For more information, see [Section 6.2](#).

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4. Kernel printer devices

There are two completely different device drivers for the parallel port; which one you are using depends on your kernel version (which you can find out with the command `uname -a`). The driver changed in Linux 2.1.33; essentially all current systems will be running kernel 2.2 or later, so you'll probably want to skip ahead to the parport driver section.

A few details are the same for both styles of driver. Most notably, many people have found that Linux will not detect their parallel port unless they disable "Plug and Play" in their PC BIOS. (This is no surprise; the track record for PnP of non-PCI devices with Windows and elsewhere has been something of a disaster).

4.1. The lp device (kernels <=2.1.32)

The Linux kernel (<=2.1.32), assuming you have compiled in or loaded the lp device (the output of `cat /proc/devices` should include the device lp if it is loaded), provides one or more of `/dev/lp0`, `/dev/lp1`, and `/dev/lp2`. These are NOT assigned dynamically, rather, each corresponds to a specific hardware I/O address. This means that your first printer may be `lp0` or `lp1` depending on your hardware. Just try both.

A few users have reported that their bidirectional lp ports aren't detected if they use an older unidirectional printer cable. Check that you've got a decent cable.

One cannot run the plip and lp drivers at the same time on any given port (under 2.0, anyway). You can, however, have one or the other driver loaded at any given time either manually, or by kerneld with version 2.x (and later 1.3.x) kernels. By carefully setting the interrupts and such, you can supposedly run plip on one port and lp on the other. One person did so by editing the drivers; I eagerly await a success report of someone doing so with only a clever command line.

There is a little utility called `tunelp` floating about with which you, as root, can tune the Linux 2.0 lp device's interrupt usage, polling rate, and other options.

When the lp driver is built into the kernel, the kernel will accept an `lp=` option to set interrupts and io addresses:

```
When the lp driver is built in to the kernel, you may use the
LILO/LOADLIN command line to set the port addresses and interrupts
that the driver will use.

Syntax:      lp=port0[,irq0[,port1[,irq1[,port2[,irq2]]]]]

For example: lp=0x378,0    or    lp=0x278,5,0x378,7 **

Note that if this feature is used, you must specify *all* the ports
you want considered, there are no defaults. You can disable a
built-in driver with lp=0.
```

When loaded as a module, it is possible to specify io addresses and interrupt lines on the `insmod` command line (or in `/etc/conf.modules` so as to affect kerneld) using the usual module argument syntax. The parameters are `io=port0,port1,port2` and `irq=irq0,irq1,irq2`. Read ye the man page for `insmod` for more information on this.

**For those of you who (like me) can never find the standard port numbers when you need them, they are as in the second example above. The other port (`lp0`) is at 0x3bc. I've no idea what interrupt it usually uses.

The source code for the Linux 2.0 parallel port driver is in `/usr/src/linux/drivers/char/lp.c`.

4.2. The parport device (kernels >= 2.1.33)

Beginning with kernel 2.1.33 (and available as a patch for kernel 2.0.30), the lp device is merely a client of the new parport device. The addition of the parport device corrects a number of the problems that plague the old lp device driver – it can share the port with other drivers, it dynamically assigns available parallel ports to device numbers rather than enforcing a fixed correspondence between I/O addresses and port numbers, and so forth.

The advent of the parport device has enabled a whole flock of new parallel-port drivers for things like Zip drives, Backpack CD-ROMs and disks, and so forth. Some of these are also available in versions for 2.0 kernels; look around on the web.



The main difference that you will notice, so far as printing goes, is that parport-based kernels dynamically assign lp devices to parallel ports. So what was lp1 under Linux 2.0 may well be lp0 under Linux 2.2. Be sure to check this if you upgrade from an lp-driver kernel to a parport-driver kernel.

The most popular problems with this device seems to stem from misconfiguration:

The Distribution

Some GNU/Linux distributions don't ship with a properly setup /etc/modules.conf (or /etc/conf.modules), so the driver isn't loaded properly when you need it to be. With a recent modutils, the proper magical lines from modules.conf seem to be:

```
alias /dev/printers lp          # only for devfs?
alias /dev/lp*      lp          # only for devfs?
alias parport_lowlevel parport_pc # missing in Red Hat 6.0-6.1
```

The BIOS

Many PC BIOSes will make the parallel port into a Plug-and-Play device. This just adds needless complexity to a perfectly simple device that is nearly always present; turn off the PnP setting for your parallel port ("LPT1" in many BIOSes) if your parallel port isn't detected by the Linux driver. The correct setting is often called "legacy", "ISA", or "0x378", but probably not "disabled".

You can also read the [parport documentation](#) in your kernel sources, or look at the [parport web site](#).

4.3. Serial devices

Serial devices are usually called something like /dev/ttyS1 under Linux. The utility `stty` will allow you to interactively view or set the settings for a serial port; `setserial` will allow you to control a few extended attributes and configure IRQs and I/O addresses for non-standard ports. Further discussion of serial ports under Linux may be found in the [Serial-HOWTO](#).

When using a slow serial printer with flow control, you may find that some of your print jobs get truncated. This may be due to the serial port, whose default behavior is to purge any untransmitted characters from its buffer 30 seconds after the port device is closed. The buffer can hold up to 4096 characters, and if your printer uses flow control and is slow enough that it can't accept all the data from the buffer within 30 seconds after printing software has closed the serial port, the tail end of the buffer's contents will be lost. If the command `cat file > /dev/ttyS2` produces complete printouts for short files but truncated ones for longer files, you may have this condition.

The 30 second interval can be adjusted through the "closing_wait" commandline option of `setserial` (version 2.12 and later). A machine's serial ports are usually initialized by a call to `setserial` in the `rc.serial` boot file. The call for the printing serial port can be modified to set the `closing_wait` at the same time as it sets that port's other parameters.

4.4. USB Devices

I don't have any USB devices to play with, so all I can offer are pointers. Once set up, you end up with the device file /dev/usb/lp0, much as you do with parallel ports, which will work fine in `printcap` or as a PDQ local-port device.

USB is documented at the [Linux USB Website](#). It should work, one way or another, with any late-model 2.2 kernel, late-mode 2.3 development kernels, and any 2.4 kernel, one those are out. or newer.

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5. Supported Printers

The Linux kernel will let you speak with any printer that you can plug into a serial, parallel, or usb port, plus any printer on the network. Unfortunately, this alone is insufficient; you must also be able to generate data that the printer will understand. Primary among the incompatible printers are those referred to as "Windows" or "GDI" printers. They are called this because all or part of the printer control language and the design details of the printing mechanism are not documented. Typically the vendor will provide a Windows driver and happily sell only to Windows users; this is why they are called Winprinters. In some cases the vendor also provides drivers for NT, OS/2, or other operating systems.

Many of these printers *do not work* with free software. A few of them do, and some of them only work a little bit (usually because someone has reverse engineered the details needed to write a driver). See the printer support list below for details on specific printers.

A few printers are in-between. Some of NEC's models, for example, implement a simple form of the standard printer language PCL that allows PCL-speaking software to print at up to 300dpi, but only NEC knows how to get the full 600dpi out of these printers.

Note that if you already have one of these Winprinters, there are roundabout ways to print to one, but they're rather awkward. See [Section 12](#) in this document for more discussion of Windows-only printers.

5.1. Postscript

As for what printers *do* work with free software, the best choice is to buy a printer with native PostScript support *in firmware*. Nearly all Un*x software that produces printable output produces it in PostScript, so obviously it'd be nice to get a printer that supports PostScript directly. Unfortunately, PostScript support is scarce outside the laser printer domain, and is sometimes a costly add-on.

Un*x software, and the publishing industry in general, have standardized upon Postscript as the printer control language of choice. This happened for several reasons:

Timing

Postscript arrived as part of the Apple Laserwriter, a perfect companion to the Macintosh, the system largely responsible for the desktop publishing revolution of the 80s.

It's device-independent

Postscript programs can be run to generate output on a pixel screen, a vector screen, a fax machine, or almost any sort of printer mechanism, without the original program needing to be changed. Postscript output will look the same on any Postscript device, at least within the limits of the device's capabilities. Before the creation of PDF, people exchanged complex documents online as Postscript files. The only reason this standard didn't "stick" was because Windows machines didn't usually include a Postscript previewer, so Adobe specified hyperlinks and compression for Postscript, called the result PDF, distributed previewers for it, and invented a market for their "distiller" tools (the functionality of which is also provided by ghostscript's ps2pdf and pdf2ps programs).

It's a real programming language

Postscript is a complete programming language; you can write software to do most anything in it. This is mostly useful for defining subroutines at the start of your program to reproduce complex things over and over throughout your document, like a logo or a big "DRAFT" in the background. But there's no reason you couldn't compute *À la* a Postscript program.

It's open

Postscript is fully specified in a publically available series of books (which you can find at any good bookstore). Although Adobe invented it and provides the dominant commercial implementation, other vendors like Aladdin produce independently coded implementations as well.

5.2. Non-Postscript

Failing the (larger) budget necessary to buy a Postscript printer, you can use any printer supported by Ghostscript, the free Postscript interpreter used in lieu of actual printer Postscript support. Note that most GNU/Linux distributions can only ship a somewhat outdated version of Ghostscript due to the license. Fortunately, there is usually a prepackaged up to date Ghostscript made available in each distribution's contrib area.

Adobe now has a new printer language called "PrintGear". I think it's a greatly simplified binary format language with some Postscript heritage but no Postscript compatibility. And I haven't heard of Ghostscript supporting it. But some PrintGear printers seem to support another language like PCL, and these printers will work with GNU/Linux (iff the PCL is implemented in the printer and not in a Windows driver).



Similarly, Adobe offers a host-based Postscript implementation called PressReady. This works much like Ghostscript does to provide Postscript support for a non-Postscript printer, but has the disadvantage that it runs only on Windows.

5.3. What printers work?

You can look in several places to see if a particular printer will work. The cooperatively maintained Printing HOWTO printer database aims to be a comprehensive listing of the state of GNU/Linux printer support. A summary of it is below; be sure to check online for more details and information on what driver(s) to use.

The best bet for new printer shoppers is to consult my list of suggested printers. These center around color inkjets and mono laser devices. You can even help support this document and the website by buying from one of my affiliated vendors.

Ghostscript's printer compatibility page has a list of some working printers, as well as links to other pages.

Dejanews contains hundreds of "it works" and "it doesn't work" testimonials. Try all three, and when you're done, check that your printer is present and correct in the database, so that it will be listed properly in this document in the future.

5.3.1. Printer compatibility list

This section is a summary of the online database. The online version includes device specifications, notes, driver information, user-maintained documentation, manufacturer web pages, and interface scripts for using drivers with several print spooling systems (including LPR, LPRng, PDQ, and CUPS). The online version of this list is also interactive; people can and do add printers all the time, so be sure to check it as well. Finally, if your printer isn't listed, add it!

Note that this listing is not gospel; people sometimes add incorrect information, which I eventually weed out. Entries I have not sanity-checked are marked with an asterisk (*). Verify from Dejanews that a printer works for someone before buying it based on this list. If you can find no information in Dejanews, mail me and I'll put you in contact with the person who added the printer.

Printers here are categorized into three types:

- Perfectly*
Perfect printers work perfectly – you can print to the full ability of the printer, including color, full resolution, etc. In a few cases printers with undocumented "resolution enhancement" modes that don't work are listed as perfect; generally the difference in print quality is small enough that it isn't worth worrying about.
- Mostly*
You can print fine, but there may be minor limitations of one sort or another in either printing or other features.
- Partially*
You can print, but maybe not in color, or only at a poor resolution. See the online listing for information on the limitation.
- Paperweight*
You can't print a darned thing; typically this will be due to lack of a driver and/or documentation on how to write one. Paperweights occasionally get "promoted", either when someone discovers that an existing driver works, or when someone creates a new driver, but you shouldn't count on this happening.

In all cases, since this information is provided by dozens of people, none of it is guaranteed to be correct; entries with an asterisk (*) are particularly suspect. The facts, however, should be easy to corroborate from the driver web pages and manufacturer web sites.

And without further ado, here is the printer compatibility list:

Table 1. Linux Printer Support

Manufacturer	Perfectly	Mostly	Partially	Paperweight
Alps		MD-1000* MD-1300* MD-2000* MD-4000* MD-5000*		



Apollo			P-1200 P-2200	
Apple	12/640ps Dot Matrix ImageWriter ImageWriter LQ LaserWriter 16/600* LaserWriter IINTX* LaserWriter IIg LaserWriter Select 360*	Color StyleWriter 1500 Color StyleWriter 2200 Color StyleWriter 2400 Color StyleWriter 2500 ImageWriter II* LaserWriter NT StyleWriter 1200 StyleWriter I StyleWriter II		
Avery	Personal Label Printer+	Personal Label Printer		
Brother	HL-4Ve HL-8 HL-10V HL-10h HL-630 HL-660 HL-720 HL-730 HL-760 HL-820 HL-960* HL-1020 HL-1040 HL-1070* HL-1250 HL-1260 HL-1270N HL-1660e HL-2060	HJ-400 HL-1050 HL-1060	DCP-1200 HL-1030* HL-1240* MC-3000 MFC 7150C MFC-4350 MFC-6550MC MFC-8300 MFC-9050 MFC-9100c* MFC-9500 MFC-9600	4550* MP-21C
C.Itoh	M8510			
CalComp	Artisan 1023 penplotter*			
Canon	BJ-5 BJ-10e BJ-20 BJ-200 BJ-330 BJC-70 BJC-210 BJC-250* BJC-600*	BJC-80 BJC-240* BJC-1000* BJC-2000* BJC-2100* BJC-3000* BJC-4310SP BJC-6000* BJC-7004*	BJ-30* BJ-300 BJC-210SP BJC-4550 BJC-6100* BJC-6200* BJC-7000* BJC-7100* BJC-8200	BJC-5000 BJC-5100 BJC-6500 BJC-8000 LBP-460* LBP-600 LBP-660* LBP-800* Multipass L6000*



	BJC-610 BJC-620 BJC-800 BJC-4000 BJC-4100 BJC-4200 BJC-4300* BJC-4400* GP 335* GP 405 LBP-4+ LBP-4U LBP-8A1 LBP-430 LBP-1260 LBP-1760 LIPS-III	LBP-4sx	MultiPASS C2500* MultiPASS C3000* MultiPASS C3500* MultiPASS C5000* MultiPASS C5500 S450*	
Citizen	ProJet II* ProJet IIc	printiva600C		
Compaq		IJ750*	IJ900	IJ300*
DEC	DECWriter 500i* DECwriter 110i* DECwriter 520ic* LA50* LA70* LA75* LA75 Plus* LN03* LN07*	LJ250* LN17	1800*	
Dymo-CoStar	ASCII 250* ASCII+* EL40* EL60* LabelWriter II* LabelWriter XL* LabelWriter XL+* SE250* SE250+* Turbo*			
Epson	ActionLaser 1100* ActionLaser II* ActionPrinter 3250 Dot Matrix EPL-5200* EPL-7100 L-1000* LP 8000	EPL-5700 Stylus Color 300 Stylus Color 680* Stylus Color 777* Stylus Color 880* Stylus Color 980 Stylus Color II* Stylus Color IIs	Stylus Photo 2000P Stylus Scan 2500	EPL-5700L Stylus Color 480



	LQ-24 LQ-500 LQ-570+* LQ-850 LQ-2550 LX-1050 SQ 1170 Stylus 800* Stylus Color Stylus Color 400 Stylus Color 440* Stylus Color 460 Stylus Color 500 Stylus Color 600 Stylus Color 640 Stylus Color 660 Stylus Color 670 Stylus Color 740 Stylus Color 760* Stylus Color 800 Stylus Color 850 Stylus Color 860 Stylus Color 900 Stylus Color 1160 Stylus Color 1500 Stylus Color 1520 Stylus Color 3000 Stylus Color I Stylus Color PRO Stylus Photo Stylus Photo 700 Stylus Photo 720* Stylus Photo 750 Stylus Photo 870 Stylus Photo 1200 Stylus Photo 1270 Stylus Photo EX	Stylus Pro XL		
Fujitsu	1200* 2400* 3400* PrintPartner 10V* PrintPartner 16DV* PrintPartner 20W* PrintPartner 8000*			



HP	2000C 2500C Business Inkjet 2250* Business Inkjet 2250TN* Color LaserJet 4500 Color LaserJet 8550GN* DesignJet 3500CP DeskJet DeskJet 400 DeskJet 420C DeskJet 500* DeskJet 500C* DeskJet 510 DeskJet 520 DeskJet 540C* DeskJet 550C* DeskJet 560C* DeskJet 600* DeskJet 648C* DeskJet 810C* DeskJet 1200C DeskJet 1600C DeskJet 1600CM LaserJet* LaserJet 2 w/PS* LaserJet 2D LaserJet 2P LaserJet 2P Plus LaserJet 3 LaserJet 3D LaserJet 3P w/PS LaserJet 4* LaserJet 4 Plus LaserJet 4L LaserJet 4M LaserJet 4ML* LaserJet 4P LaserJet 4Si LaserJet 4V LaserJet 5 LaserJet 5L* LaserJet 5M* LaserJet 5MP* LaserJet 5P* LaserJet 6 LaserJet 6L* LaserJet 6MP* LaserJet 1100* LaserJet 2100 LaserJet 2100M LaserJet 3200* LaserJet 4050*	Color LaserJet 5 DesignJet 230* DesignJet 350C DesignJet 650C* DesignJet 750C Plus* DesignJet ColorPro CAD DeskJet 310 DeskJet 610C* DeskJet 610CL DeskJet 612C DeskJet 660C DeskJet 670C DeskJet 672C DeskJet 682C DeskJet 690C DeskJet 692C DeskJet 694C DeskJet 697C DeskJet 710C* DeskJet 712C* DeskJet 720C* DeskJet 722C* DeskJet 812C* DeskJet 815C* DeskJet 820C* DeskJet 832C DeskJet 840C* DeskJet 842C* DeskJet 850C* DeskJet 855C* DeskJet 870C DeskJet 870Cse* DeskJet 870Cxi DeskJet 880C* DeskJet 882C* DeskJet 895C* DeskJet 895Cse* DeskJet 895Cxi* DeskJet 950C* DeskJet 955C* DeskJet 970C DeskJet 970Cse* DeskJet 990Cxi* DeskJet 1000C* DeskJet 1100C DeskJet 1120C DeskJet 1220C LaserJet 2 LaserJet 6P LaserJet 4000	Color LaserJet 5000 DeskJet 320 DeskJet 340C* DeskJet 890C DeskJet 930C* DeskJet 932C* LaserJet 1100A OfficeJet 500* OfficeJet 600* OfficeJet 625* OfficeJet 635* OfficeJet 710* OfficeJet G55* OfficeJet G85 OfficeJet G95 OfficeJet T45* OfficeJet T65 PhotoSmart P1000 PhotoSmart P1100	Business Inkjet 2200* LaserJet 3100* LaserJet 3150
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	LaserJet 5000 LaserJet 8000 LaserJet 8100* LaserJet Plus* LaserJet Series II* Mopier 240* Mopier 320* PaintJet* PaintJet XL* PaintJet XL300* ThinkJet*	OfficeJet Pro 1150C OfficeJet Pro 1170C OfficeJet Pro 1175C OfficeJet R45 OfficeJet R60 PSC 500		
Heidelberg	Digimaster 9110*			
Hitachi	DDP 70 (with MicroPress)*			
IBM	3853 JetPrinter* 4019* 4029 10P* 4303 Network Color Printer* Execjet 4072* Infoprint 12* Page Printer 3112* ProPrinterII*		4029 030 LaserPrinter 10	
Imagen	ImPress*			
Infotec	infotec 4651 MF*			
Kodak	DigiSource 9110* IS 70 CPIO*			
Kyocera	F-3300 FS-600* FS-600 (KPDL-2)* FS-680* FS-800* FS-1200* FS-1700+* FS-1750* FS-3750* FS-5900C* P-2000*	F-800T* FS-3500*		
LaserMaster				LM 1000



Lexmark	4039 10plus Optra Color 40 Optra Color 45 Optra Color 1200 Optra Color 1275 Optra E* Optra E+* Optra E310* Optra E312 Optra Ep* Optra K 1220 Optra M410 Optra M412 Optra R+* Optra S 1250* Optra S 1855* Optra Se 3455* Optra T610 Optra T612 Optra T614 Optra T616 Optra W810 Valuewriter 300*	1020 Business 3000 3200*	1000 1100 2030* 2050 2070 5000 5700* 7000* 7200 Winwriter 400* Z11* Z51 Z52*	1020 Winwriter 100* Winwriter 150c* Winwriter 200 Z12* Z22* Z32*
Minolta	PagePro 6* PagePro 6e* PagePro 6ex* PagePro 8*		PagePro 8L*	PagePro 6L
Mitsubishi	CP50 Color Printer*			
NEC	P2X* PinWriter P6* PinWriter P6 plus* PinWriter P7* PinWriter P7 plus* PinWriter P60* PinWriter P70* SilentWriter LC 890* Silentwriter2 S60P* Silentwriter2 model 290* SuperScript 660i* SuperScript 1800	Silentwriter 95f* SuperScript 4600N*	SuperScript 100C* SuperScript 150C* SuperScript 650C* SuperScript 750C* SuperScript 860* SuperScript 870* SuperScript 1260*	SuperScript 610plus* SuperScript 660* SuperScript 660plus*
Oce	3165*			



Okidata	ML 380* OL 410e OL 600e* OL 610e/PS OL 800 OL 810e/PS OL400ex OL810ex OL820* OL830Plus Okipage 6e Okipage 6ex* Okipage 8c Okipage 8p Okipage 10e Okipage 10ex Okipage 12i Okipage 20DXn	Microline 182 OL 400w* OL 610e/S Okijet 2500* Okipage 4w Okipage 4w+ Okipage 8w Okipage 8w Lite Okipage 8z Super 6e	Microline 192+ Okipage 6w	Okijet 2010
Olivetti	JP350S* JP450* JP470* PG 306*			
PCPI	1030*			
Panasonic	KX-P1123* KX-P1124* KX-P1150* KX-P1180i* KX-P2023* KX-P2135* KX-P2150* KX-P4410* KX-P4450* KX-P5400* KX-P8420* KX-P8475* KX-PS600*	KX-P2123* KX-P6150*	KX-P1624 KX-P6500*	KX-P6100* KX-P6300 GDI* KX-P8410*
Printrex			820 DL*	
QMS	2425 Turbo EX* LPK-100*	magicolor 2+* ps-810*		magicolor 2
Raven		LP-410		
Ricoh	4081* 4801* 6000* Aficio 220* Aficio 700	Aficio 401*		Aficio Color 2206* Afico FX10*



	Aficio AP2000			
Samsung	ML-85* ML-4500 ML-4600* ML-5000a* ML-6000/6100* ML-7000/7000P/7000N* ML-7050* QL-5100A* QL-6050* SI-630A*	ML-85G QL-85G		ML-5050G* SF/MSYS/MJ-4700/4800/4500C*
Seiko	SpeedJET 200*	SLP* SLP 120* SLP 220* SLP EZ30* SLP Plus* SLP Pro*		
Sharp	AR-161*		AJ-1800*	
Star	LC24-100* LS-04 NL-10*	LC 90* LC24-200* LaserPrinter 8 NX-1001* StarJet 48*		WinType 4000*
Tally	MT908*			
Tektronix	3693d color printer, 8-bit mode* 4693d color printer, 2-bit mode* 4693d color printer, 4-bit mode* 4695* 4696* 4697* Phaser 780 Phaser 850* Phaser IISX* Phaser PX*			
Xerox	2700 XES 3700 XES 4045 XES* DocuPrint 4508 DocuPrint C20 DocuPrint C55* DocuPrint N17 DocuPrint N32*	DocuPrint C6* DocuPrint P8e DocuPrint P12*	DocuPrint C8* DocuPrint C11* DocuPrint XJ6C DocuPrint XJ8C Document Homecentre WorkCentre 450cp*	DocuPrint M760* DocuPrint P8* WorkCentre 385 WorkCentre XD120f* WorkCentre XE80 WorkCentre XE90fx



	Document Centre 400*		WorkCentre 470cx*	
			WorkCentre XK35c	

* This entry has not been sanity-checked by me.

5.4. How to buy a printer

It's a bit difficult to select a printer these days; there are many models to choose from. Here are some shopping tips:

Cost

You get what you pay for. Most printers under \$200–300 can print reasonably well, but printing costs a lot per page. For some printers, it only takes one or two cartridges to add up to the cost of a new printer! Similarly, the cheapest printers won't last very long. The least expensive printers, for example, have a MTBF of about three *months*; obviously these are poorly suited for heavy use.

Inkjets

Inkjet printheads will clog irreparably over time, so the ability to replace the head somehow is a feature. Inkjet printheads are expensive, with integrated head/ink cartridges costing ten times (!) what ink-only cartridges go for, so the ability to replace the head only when needed is a feature. Epson Styluses tend to have fixed heads, and HP DeskJets tend to have heads integrated into the cartridges. Canons have three-part cartridges with independently replaceable ink tanks; I like this design. OTOH, the HP cartridges aren't enormously more expensive, and HP makes a better overall line; Canon is often the third choice from the print quality standpoint; and Epson Styluses are the best supported by free software at the moment. You just can't win.

Lasers

Laser printers consume a drum and toner, plus a little toner wiping bar. The cheapest designs include toner and drum together in a big cartridge; these designs cost the most to run. The best designs for large volume take plain toner powder or at least separate toner cartridges and drums.

Photography

The best color photograph output is from continuous tone printers which use a silver halide plus lasers approach to produce surprise! actual photographs. Since these printers cost tens of thousands to buy, Ofoto.com offers inexpensive print-by-print jobs. The results are stunning; even the best inkjets don't compare.

The best affordable photo prints come from the dye-sublimation devices like some members of the Alps series (thermal transfer of dry ink or dye sublimation), or the few consumer-grade Sony photo printers. Unfortunately the Alps devices have poor free software support (the one report I have from a Alps user of the Ghostscript driver speaks of banding and grainy pictures), and even then it's unclear if the dye-sub option is supported. I have no idea if the Sonys work at all.

The more common photo-specialized inkjets usually feature 6 color CMYKcm printing or even a 7 color CMYKcmy process. All photo-specialized printers are expensive to run; either you always run out of blue and have to replace the whole cartridge, or the individual color refills for your high-end photo printer cost an arm and a leg. Special papers cost a bundle, too; you can expect top-quality photo inkjet output to run over a US dollar per page. See also the section on printing photographs later in this document, and the sections on color tuning (such as it is) in Ghostscript.

Speed

Speed is proportional to processing power, bandwidth, and generally printer cost. The fastest printers will be networked Postscript printers with powerful internal processors. Consumer-grade printers will depend partly on Ghostscript's rendering speed, which you can affect by having a reasonably well-powered machine; full pages of color, in particular, can consume large amounts of host memory. As long as you actually *have* that memory, things should work out fine.

Forms

If you want to print on multicopy forms, then you need an impact printer; many companies still make dot matrix printers, most of which emulate traditional Epson models and thus work fine.

Labels

There are two supported lines of label printer; look for the Dymo-Costar and the Seiko SLP models. Other models may or may not work. Avery also makes various sizes of stick-on labels in 8.5x11 format that you can run through a regular printer.

Plotting

Big drafting formats are usually supported these days by monster inkjets; HP is a popular choice. Mid-sized (11x17) inkjets are also commonly used for smaller prints. Much plotting of this sort is done with the languages RTL, HP-GL, and HP-GL/2, all of which are simple HP proprietary vector languages usually generated directly by application software.



5.4.1. What do I have?

I own an HP Deskjet 500, a Lexmark Optra 40, and a Canon BJC-4100. All work perfectly: the HP and Canon are older models, well supported by Ghostscript; and the Optra is a more modern color inkjet with full Postscript and PCL 5 support (!).

I also own a Hawking Technology 10/100 Ethernet print server (model 7117, actually made by Zero One Technologies in Taiwan); this makes it possible to put the printer anywhere with power and a network jack, instead of just near a computer. It's a little dongle that attaches to the printer's parallel port and has an Ethernet jack on the other side. The only flaw with this is that it doesn't allow bidirectional communication, so I can't arrange to be sent email when the ink is low.

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6. Spooling software

Until recently, the choice for free software users was simple – everyone ran the same old `lpd` lifted mostly verbatim out of BSD's Net-2 code. Even today, most vendors ship this software. But this is beginning to change. SVR4-like systems including Sun's Solaris come with a completely different print spooling package, centered around `lpsched`.

Today, there are a number of good systems to choose from. I describe them all below; read the descriptions and make your own choice. PDQ is the simplest modern system with a GUI; it is suitable for both basic home users and (in a hybrid `pdq/lprng` setup) people in many larger environments. For business environments with mainly networked Postscript printers, a front-end program like GPR with LPRng is a good alternative; it handles PPD options directly and has a slightly nicer interface. In other cases CUPS is a good option; it too has excellent Postscript printer support, and offers IPP support, a web interface, and a number of other features.

6.1. LPD

LPD, the original BSD Unix Line Printer Daemon, has been the standard on Unix for years. It is available for every style of Unix, and offers a rather minimal feature set derived from the needs of timesharing-era computing. Despite this somewhat peculiar history, it is still useful today as a basic print spooler. To be really useful with modern printer, a good deal of extra work is needed in the form of companion filter scripts and front-end programs. But these exist, and it does all work.

LPD is also the name given to the network printing protocol by [RFC 1179](#). This network protocol is spoken not only by the LPD daemon itself, but by essentially every networked print server, networked printer, and every other print spooler out there; LPD is the least common denominator of standards-based network printing.

LPRng (see [Section 6.3](#)) is a far better implementation of the basic LPD design than the regular one; if you must use LPD, consider using LPRng instead. There is far less voodoo involved in making it do what you want, and what voodoo there is is well documented.

There are a large number of LPD sources floating around in the world. Arguably, some strain of BSD Unix is probably the official owner, but everyone implements changes willy-nilly, and they all cross-pollinate in unknown ways, such that it is difficult to say with certainty exactly which LPD you might have. Of the readily available LPDs, VA Linux offers one with a few minor modifications that make the user interface much more flexible. The [SourceForge LPD](#) supports command-line option specification with a `-o` flag; options are then passed through to filters. This is similar to the features offered by a number of traditional Unix vendors, and similar to (although incompatible with) LPRng's `-z` option mechanism.

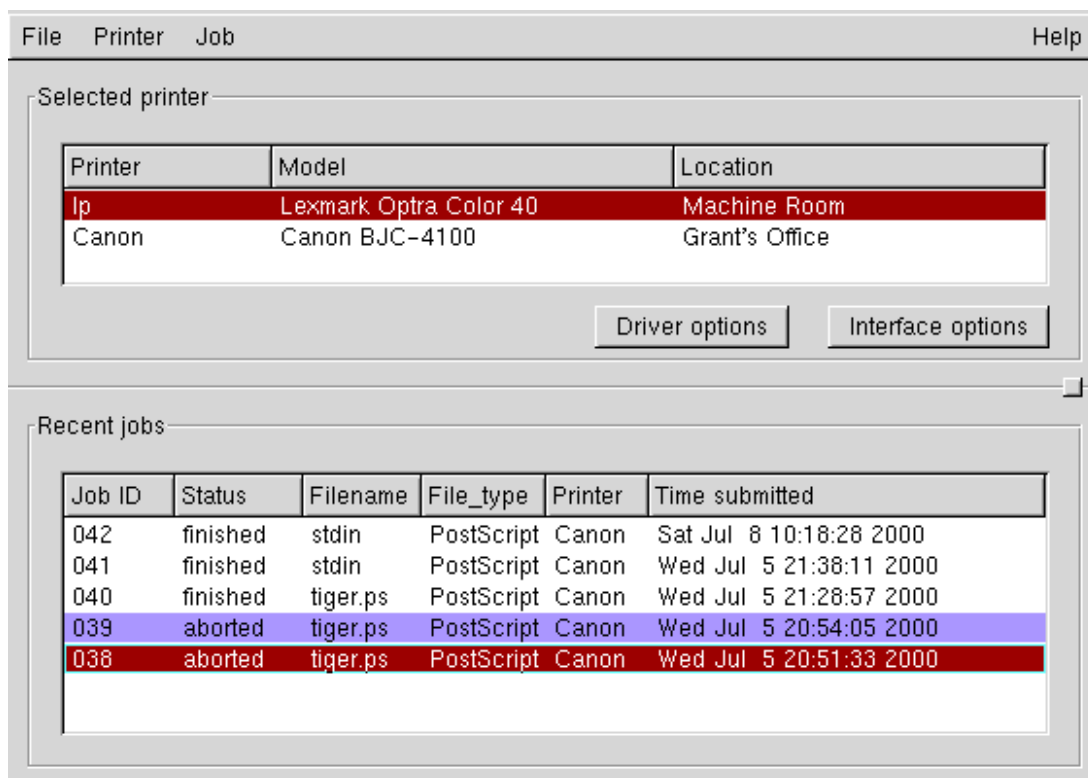
6.1.1. LPD front-ends

If you go with LPD, the best way to use it is via a front-end. There are several to choose from; GPR (see [Section 3.3](#)) and XPDQ (see [Section 6.2](#)) are perhaps the two best. Others exist; tell me about them.

6.2. PDQ

[PDQ](#) is a non-daemon-centric print system which has a built-in, and sensible, driver configuration syntax. This includes the ability to declare printing options, and a GUI or command line tool for users to specify these options with; users get a nice dialog box in which to specify resolution, duplexing, paper type, etc (see [Figure 9](#)).

Figure 8. XPDQ Main Window



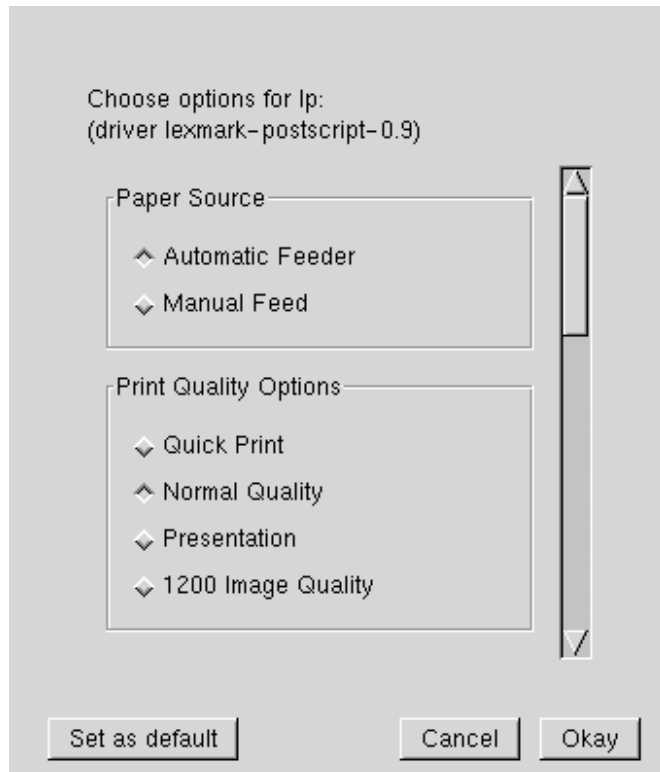
Running all of the filters as the user has a number of advantages: the security problems possible from Postscript are mostly gone, multi-file LaTeX jobs can be printed effectively as dvi files, and so forth.

This is what I now use; I've written driver spec files for my printers, and there are several included with the distribution, so there are plenty of examples to base yours on. I've also written a few tools to automate driver spec generation to help the rest of you.

PDQ is not without flaws: most notably it processes the entire job before sending it to the printer. This means that, for large jobs, PDQ may simply be impractical you can end up with hundreds of megs being copied back and forth on your disk. Even worse, for slow drivers like the better quality inkjet drivers, the job will not start printing until Ghostscript and the driver have finished processing. This may be many minutes after submission.

If you have many users, many printers, or anything else complex going on, I recommend using PDQ as a front-end to LPD—protocol based network printing (you can print via the lpd protocol to the local machine). In most such situations, rather than using the traditional BSD lpd as the back-end, I recommend LPRng:

Figure 9. XPDQ Driver Options Window



6.3. LPRng

Some GNU/Linux vendors (including Caldera) provide LPRng, a far less ancient LPD print spooling implementation. LPRng is far easier to administer for large installations (read: more than one printer, any serial printers, or any peculiar non-lpd network printers) and has a less frightfully haphazard codebase than does stock lpd. It can even honestly claim to be secure – there are no SUID binaries, and it supports authentication via PGP or Kerberos.

LPRng also includes some example setups for common network printers – HP LaserJets, mainly, that include some accounting abilities. If you'd like more information on LPRng, check out the [LPRng Web Page](#). LPRng uses more or less the same basic filter model as does BSD lpd, so the [LPD support](#) offered by my website applies to LPRng as well. This can help you effectively use free software drivers for many printers.

LPRng is distributed under either the GPL or an Artistic license.

6.4. PPR

[PPR](#) is a Postscript-centric spooler which includes a rudimentary Postscript parsing ability from which it derives several nice features. It includes good accounting capabilities, good support for Appletalk, SMB, and LPD clients, and much better error handling than lpd. PPR, like every other spooler here, can call Ghostscript to handle non-Postscript printers.

I only recently found out about PPR; I don't know of anyone who has tried it. It was written by, and is in use at, Trinity College. The license is BSD-style; free for all use but credit is due.

According to the documentation, it's somewhat experimental. Malformed Postscript jobs won't print; instead they bounce, and it's up to the user to fix the Postscript. This may make it unsuitable for some environments, although most users generate Postscript with a small handful of well-characterized Postscript generators, so it probably wouldn't be that big an issue.

6.5. CUPS

One interesting newcomer on the scene is [CUPS](#), an implementation of the Internet Printing Protocol (IPP), an HTTP-like RFC standard replacement protocol for the venerable (and klunky) LPD protocol. The implementation of CUPS has been driven by Michael Sweet of Easy Software Products; CUPS is distributed under the GPL.



I've finally done some work with CUPS, and it does work as advertised. There are a number of very good features in it, including sensible option handling; web, gui, and command-line interfaces; and a mime-based filtering system with strong support for Postscript. Since it is so new, however, it does have a number of quirks, and it is hard to recommend for large or secure installations at this time (as of version 1.1). It is a fine solution, however, for smaller installations or especially larger installations with trusted users.

Like other systems, CUPS can be used with most existing drivers. Unfortunately, it's a bit tricky to configure an arbitrary driver for use with CUPS at least if you want all the options to work so it's best to find a preexisting PPD file and filter script to make your driver go. There are at least four sets of drivers which you can use with CUPS:

Foomatic

My web-based CUPS-O-Matic system can generate a suitable PPD for use with any printer driver that has full details entered in the LinuxPrinting.org Database. The PPD gets used together with a backend script named **cupsonomatic**. CUPS-O-Matic uses free software drivers. At the moment there is support for a rather large number of printers in this system, and both XPP and QtCUPS (graphical front-ends for CUPS users) have added special support for several of the many styles of adjustments useful with Foomatic's free drivers but not supported by CUPS itself. Foomatic forms a basis for non-Postscript printer support in a number of GNU/Linux distributions.

CUPS Drivers and KUPS

The CUPS Drivers project is accumulating PPD files useable with either Postscript printers or the backend filter **ps2gs2raw**. These PPD files use free software drivers. KUPS is a companion setup program. The driver project has mostly stalled with the advent of Foomatic, but KUPS is a nifty setup tool shipped standard in a number of distributions.

Postscript PPDs

CUPS can use vendor-supplied PPD files for Postscript printers directly. Often these come with the Windows drivers for a printer, or can be found on the printer vendor's website. [Adobe](#) also distributes PPD files for many Postscript printers.

ESP Print Pro

[Easy Software Products, Inc.](#) sells CUPS bundled with a collection of proprietary drivers. Although they are not free software, they do drive many common printers. The bundle is somewhat expensive measured against the price of a single supported printer, but it certainly has a place. These drivers are reputedly not terribly good, but they are somewhat more comprehensive than the coverage from free software, and even mediocre quality is preferable to a paperweight. The package includes graphical front-end tools which are reputedly not as good as XPP or QtCUPS.

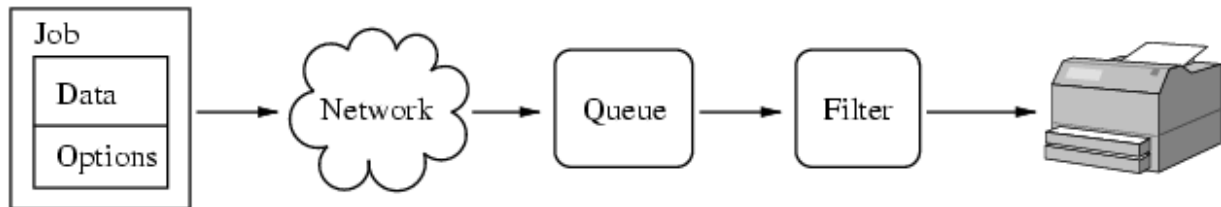
The third-party program **XPP** (see [Figure 5](#)) offers a very nice graphical interface to the user functionality of CUPS, including an marvelous interface to print-time options (shown in [Figure 6](#)). For information on using XPP, see [Section 3.3.3](#).

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7. How it all works

In order to get printing working well, you need to understand how your spooling software works. All systems work in essentially the same way, although the exact order might vary a bit, and some systems skip a step or two:

Figure 10. Spooling Illustration



1. The user submits a job along with his selection of options. The job data is usually, but not always, Postscript.
2. The spooling system copies the job and the options over the network in the general direction of the printer.
3. The spooling system waits for the printer to be available.
4. The spooling system applies the user's selected options to the job, and translates the job data into the printer's native language, which is usually not Postscript. This step is called *filtering*; most of the work in setting things up lies in getting the proper filtering to happen.
5. The job is done. The spooling system will usually do assorted cleanup things at this point. If there was an error along the way, the spooler will usually notify the user somehow (for example, by email).

7.1. PDQ

Pdq stands for "Print, Don't Queue", and the way it works reflects this design. The following sequence of events happens when you use PDQ to print:

- You run `pdq` or `xpdq`, specifying a file.
- You specify a printer.
- You specify the settings for the various options and arguments defined in the printer's PDQ driver file (duplex, copies, print quality, and so forth).
- PDQ analyzes the contents of what you printed, and follows the instructions in the PDQ driver file which tell it how to process your data for this printer with your options.
- PDQ sends the processed data to the printer according to the interface defined for that printer (straight to `/dev/lp0`, or to an LPD daemon on the network, over the network to an Apple or Microsoft system, or even to a fax machine).
- If PDQ can't send the data to the printer right away, it spawns a background process to wait and try again until it succeeds or hits a time limit.

At all times during this process, and afterwards, the state of each print job can be seen and inspected using `xpdq`. Jobs that failed are shown in red and can be resent.

7.2. LPD

Lpd stands for Line Printer Daemon, and refers in different contexts to both the daemon and the whole collection of programs which run print spooling. These are:

lpd

The spooling daemon. One of these runs to control everything on a machine, AND one is run per printer while the printer is printing.

lpr

The user spooling command. Lpr contacts lpd and injects a new print job into the spool.

lpq

Lists the jobs in a print queue.

lpc

The Lpd system control command. With lpc you can stop, start, reorder, etc, the print queues.

lprm

lprm removes a job from the print spool.



So how does it fit together? The following things happen:

1. At boot time, **lpd** is run. It waits for connections and manages printer queues.
2. A user submits a job with the **lpr** command or, alternatively, with an **lpr** front-end like GPR, PDQ, etc. **Lpr** contacts **lpd** over the network and submits both the user's data file (containing the print data) and a control file (containing user options).
3. When the printer becomes available, the main **lpd** spawns a child **lpd** to handle the print job.
4. The child **lpd** executes the appropriate filter(s) (as specified in the `if` attribute in `/etc/printcap`) for this job and sends the resulting data on to the printer.

The `lp` system was originally designed when most printers were line printers – that is, people mostly printed plain `ascii`. By placing all sorts of magic in the `if` filter, modern printing needs can be met with **lpd** (well, more or less; many other systems do a better job).

There are many programs useful for writing LPD filters. Among them are:

gs

Ghostscript is a host-based Postscript interpreter (aka a Raster Image Processor or RIP). It accepts Postscript and produces output in various printer languages or a number of graphics formats. Ghostscript is covered in [Section 10](#).

ppdfilt

ppdfilt is a standalone version of a CUPS component. It filters Postscript, executing a few basic transformations on it (n-up printing, multiple copies, etc) and adding in user option statements according to a Postscript Printer Definition (PPD) file usually included with Postscript printers.

ppdfilt is best used together with an option-accepting LPD system (like the VA Linux LPD, or LPRng) and a filter script which parses user-provided options into the equivalent **ppdfilt** command. VA Linux and HP provide a modified `rhs-printfilters` package which does exactly this; it produces nice results if you have a Postscript printer. See [Section 8.2.2](#) for information on this system.

ps2ps

ps2ps is a utility script included with Ghostscript. It filters Postscript into more streamlined Postscript, possibly at a lower Language Level. This is useful if you have an older Postscript printer; most modern software produces modern Postscript.

mpage

mpage is a utility which accepts text or Postscript, and generates n-up output that is, output with several page images on each piece of paper. There are actually several programs which do this, including **enscript**, **nenscript**, and **a2ps**.

a2ps

a2ps, aka `any-to-ps`, is a program which accepts a variety of file types and converts them to Postscript for printing.

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8. How to set things up

For common configurations, you can probably ignore this section entirely – instead, you should jump straight to [Section 9](#) below, or better yet, your vendor's documentation. Most GNU/Linux distributions supply one or more "idiot-proof" tools to do everything described here for common printers.

If your vendor's tool doesn't work out for you, or you'd like the ability to interactively control printing options when you print, then you should use some other system. PDQ is a good choice; it provides very good functionality and is easy to setup. APS Filter is another good system; it configures LPD queues and filters very easily on most any sort of Unix system.

You can also use the printing system interfaces from the [LinuxPrinting.org Website](http://LinuxPrinting.org) to connect many free drivers into several spooling systems. Once this project is complete, these interfaces will offer the best functionality: all styles of free software drivers are supported, user-settable options are available, and most common spooling systems are supported.

8.1. Configuring PDQ

PDQ can be configured by either the superuser or by a joeuser. Root's changes are made to `/etc/printrc`, and affect everyone, while joeuser can only modify his personal `.printrc`. Everything applies to both types of configuration.

If PDQ is not available prepackaged for your distribution, you should obtain the source distribution from the [PDQ web page](#) and compile it yourself. It is an easy compile, but you must first be sure to have installed the various GTK development library packages, the C library development package, the gcc compiler, make, and possibly a few other development things.

8.1.1. Drivers and Interfaces

PDQ lets users select a printer to print to. A printer is defined in PDQ as the combination of a "driver" and an "interface". Both drivers and interfaces are, in fact, merely snippets of text in the PDQ configuration file.

A PDQ interface says everything about how to ship data out to a printer. The most common interfaces, which are predefined in the PDQ distribution's example `printrc` file, are:

local-port

A local port interface speaks to a parallel or serial port on the machine PDQ is running on. Using this interface, PDQ can print directly to your parallel port. Note that if you have a multiuser system this can cause confusion, and if you have a network the local-port interface will only apply to one system. In those cases, you can define a raw unfiltered lpd queue for the port and print to the system's lpd daemon exactly the same way from all systems and accounts without any troubles. This interface has a device name argument; the typical value would be `/dev/lp0`.

bsd-lpd

A bsd lpd interface speaks over the network to an LPD daemon or LPD-speaking networked printer. PDQ supports job submission, cancellation, and queries to LPD interfaces. This interface has hostname and queue name arguments.

appletalk

The appletalk interface allows you to print to printers over the Appletalk network; if you have a printer plugged into your Mac this is the way to go. This interface needs to have the Netatalk package installed to work.

A PDQ driver says everything about how to massage print data into a format that a particular printer can handle. For Postscript printers, this will include conversion from ascii into Postscript; for non-Postscript printers this will include conversion from Postscript into the printer's language with Ghostscript.

If one of PDQ's included driver specifications doesn't fit your printer, then read the section below on how to write your own.

8.1.2. Defining Printers

To define a printer in PDQ:

- First check that you've got suitable driver and interface declarations in the system or your personal `printrc`.
- If you want to define the printer in `/etc/printrc` (for all users), then su to root.
- Run **xpdq**, and select Printer->Add printer. This "wizard" will walk you through the selection of a driver and interface.

That's really all there is to it; most of the work lies in finding or creating a suitable driver specification if you can't find one premade.



8.1.3. Creating a PDQ Driver Declaration

Here I'll walk through an example of how to make a PDQ driver declaration. Before you try that, though, there are several places to look for existing driver specs:

- PDQ itself comes with a collection of prewritten driver files.
- The LinuxPrinting.org Website's [database](#) includes a program called "[PDO-O-Matic](#)" which will generate a PDQ specification from the information in the database. Assuming that the database contains the proper information for your printer and driver, this is the best path if you have a non-Postscript printer.
- I've written a tool called [ppdtopdq](#) which takes a Postscript Printer Definition file and converts it into a PDQ driver specification, with about 75% success. This is an option if you have a Postscript printer.

There are several places to look for the information needed to write your own PDQ driver:

- The PDQ driver specification syntax is quite rich, and is fully documented in the [printrc\(5\)](#) man page.
- The PDQ distribution includes a few example files. Look in particular at the Epson Stylus file, which demonstrates the structure of the definition for a Ghostscript-driven printer.
- The [Printing HOWTO Database](#) includes raw free software driver information for over 600 printers. This will tell you what options to give Ghostscript, or what extra program to run on the Ghostscript output.

If you have to create your own driver specification, or if you enhance one from the PDQ distribution or one of the PDQ driver generator programs mentioned above, please share your creation with the world! Send it to me (gtaylor+pht@picante.com), and I'll make sure that it gets found by future PDQ users with your type of printer.

Now, let's walk through the writing of a driver specification for a printer listed in the Printing HOWTO's database as working, but for which you can't find a PDQ driver spec. I'll use the Canon BJC-210 as the example printer.

First, we look at the [database entry](#) for this printer. Note that it is supported "perfectly", so we can expect to get comparable results (or better) to Windows users. The important information is in two places in the entry:

Notes

The human-readable notes will often contain useful information. For some printers, there is a More Info link, which usually refers to a web page run by a user with this printer, or to the driver's home page.

Driver List

Most printers have a list of drivers that are known to work. This is the most important part. You can follow the driver links to a driver-specific page, which will often have more information about how to execute the driver, as well as a link to the driver's web page, if it has one.

A PDQ driver spec has two logical functions: user interaction, and print job processing. These are represented in the file in three places:

Option Declarations

These define what options the user can set, and declare PDQ variables for later parts of the driver to use.

Language Filters

These process the print job from whatever format it arrived in (typically Postscript or ASCII) into a language the printer can understand (for example, PCL). Option values are available here, as well as in the output filter.

Output Filter

This final filter bundles up the printer data regardless of input type; often printer options are set here.

Let's work on each of these for a Canon BJC-210:

8.1.3.1. Options

The driver list for this printer includes the bj200 and bjc600 drivers, both of which are Ghostscript style drivers. The notes suggest that we use the bj200 for black-and-white printing.

So, as far as the user is concerned, the BJC-210 supports one useful option: the user should pick color or black-and-white. Let's declare that as choice option called "MODE":

```
option {
    var = "MODE"
    desc = "Print Mode"
    # default_choice "Color"      # uncomment to default to color
    choice "BW" {
        # The value part assigns to the variable MODE whatever you
        # want. Here we'll assign the text that varies between the
        # two Ghostscript option sets for the two modes.
```




```

    value = "bj200"
    help = "Fast black printing with the black cartridge."
    desc = "Black-only"
}
choice "Color" {
    value = "bjc600"
    help = "Full-color printing."
    desc = "Color"
}
}

```

With the above choice declarations, the user will see a Color or BW choice in the driver options dialog when he prints from xpdq. In the command-line pdq tool, he may specify `-oBW` or `-oColor`. The default can be set from xpdq, or declared above with the `default_choice` keyword.

8.1.3.2. Language Filtering

PDQ normally identifies its input with the **file(1)** command. For each type returned by **file** that you want to handle, you provide a `language_driver` clause. The clause consists mostly of a script to process the printjob language, in any (!) scripting language you wish (the default is the usual Bourne shell).

In our case, we want to print Postscript and ASCII on our BJC-210. This needs two language drivers: one to run Ghostscript for Postscript jobs, and one to add carriage returns to ASCII jobs:

```

# The first language_driver in the file that matches what file(1)
# says is what gets used.
language_driver ps {
    # file(1) returns "PostScript document text conforming at..."
    filetype_regx = "postscript"
    convert_exec = {
        gs -sDEVICE=$MODE -r360x360 \      # gs options from the database
          -q -dNOPAUSE -dBATCH -dSAFER \  # the "usual" Ghostscript options
          -sOutputFile=$OUTPUT $INPUT    # process INPUT into file OUTPUT

        # Those last two lines will often be the same for gs-supported
        # printers. The gs... line, however, will be different for each
        # printer.
    }
}

# We declare text after postscript, because the command "file" will
# often describe a postscript file as text (which it is).
language_driver text {
    # No filetype_regx; we match the driver's name: "text"
    convert_exec = {#!/usr/bin/perl
        # a Perl program, just because we can!
        my ($in, $out) = ($ENV{'INPUT'}, $ENV{'OUTPUT'});
        open INPUT, "$in";
        open OUTPUT, ">$out";
        while(<INPUT>) {
            chomp;
            print OUTPUT, "$_\r\n";
        }
    }
}

```

That's it! While other printers may need output filtering (as described in the next section), the above clauses are it for the BJC-210. We just wrap them all up in a named driver clause:

```

driver canon-bjc210-0.1 {
    option {
        var = "MODE"
        desc = "Print Mode"
        # default_choice "Color"      # uncomment to default to color
        choice "BW" {
            # The value part assigns to the variable MODE whatever you
            # want. Here we'll assign the text that varies between the
            # two Ghostscript option sets for the two modes.
            value = "bj200"
            help = "Fast black printing with the black cartridge."
            desc = "Black-only"
        }
        choice "Color" {
            value = "bjc600"
            help = "Full-color printing."
            desc = "Color"
        }
    }
}

```



```
}  
}  
  
# The first language_driver in the file that matches what file(1)  
# says is what gets used.  
language_driver ps {  
    # file(1) returns "PostScript document text conforming at..."  
    filetype_regx = "postscript"  
    convert_exec = {  
        gs -sDEVICE=$MODE -r360x360 \      # gs options from the database  
        -q -dNOPAUSE -dBATCH -dSAFER \    # the "usual" Ghostscript options  
        -sOutputFile=$OUTPUT $INPUT      # process INPUT into file OUTPUT  
  
        # Those last two lines will often be the same for gs-supported  
        # printers. The gs... line, however, will be different for each  
        # printer.  
    }  
}  
  
# We declare text after postscript, because the command "file" will  
# often describe a postscript file as text (which it is).  
language_driver text {  
    # No filetype_regx; we match the driver's name: "text"  
    convert_exec = {#!/usr/bin/perl  
        # a Perl program, just because we can!  
        my ($in, $out) = ($ENV{'INPUT'}, $ENV{'OUTPUT'});  
        open INPUT, "$in";  
        open OUTPUT, ">$out";  
        while(<INPUT>) {  
            chomp;  
            print OUTPUT, "$_\\r\\n";  
        }  
    }  
}  
}
```

8.1.3.3. Output Filtering

If you want to prepend or append something to all printjobs, or do some sort of transformation on all the data of all types, then it belongs in the `filter_exec` clause. Our little Canon doesn't require such a clause, but just to have an example, here's a simple illustration showing how to support duplexing and resolution choice on a Laserjet or clone that speaks PDL:

```
driver generic-ljet4-with-duplex-0.1 {  
    # First, two option clauses for the user-selectable things:  
    option {  
        var = "DUPLEX_MODE"  
        desc = "Duplex Mode"  
        default_choice = "SIMPLEX"  
        choice "SIMPLEX" {  
            value = "OFF"  
            desc = "One-sided prints"  
        }  
        choice "DUPLEX" {  
            value = "ON"  
            desc = "Two-sided prints"  
        }  
    }  
  
    option {  
        var = "GS_RES"  
        desc = "Resolution"  
        default_choice = "DPI600"  
        choice "DPI300" {  
            value = "-r300x300"  
            desc = "300 dpi"  
        }  
        choice "DPI600" {  
            value = "-r600x600"  
            desc = "600 dpi"  
        }  
    }  
}  
  
# Now, we handle Postscript input with Ghostscript's ljet4 driver:  
language_driver ps {  
    filetype_regx = "postscript"  
    convert_exec = {  
        gs -sDEVICE=ljet4 $GS_RES \  
        -q -dNOPAUSE -dBATCH -dSAFER \  
        -sOutputFile=$OUTPUT $INPUT
```



```

}
}

# Finally, we wrap the job in PJP commands:
filter_exec {
    # requires echo with escape code ability...
    echo -ne '\33%-12345X' > $OUTPUT

    echo "@PJL SET DUPLEX=$DUPLEX_MODE"    >> $OUTPUT
    # You can add additional @PJL commands like the above line here.
    # Be sure to always append (>>) to the output file!

    cat $INPUT >> $OUTPUT
    echo -ne '\33%-12345X' >> $OUTPUT
}
}

```

8.2. Configuring LPD

Most GNU/Linux systems ship with LPD. This section describes a very basic setup for LPD; further sections detail the creation of complex filters and network configuration.

8.2.1. Basic LPD configuration

The minimal setup for lpd results in a system that can queue files and print them. It will not pay any attention to whether or not your printer will understand them, and will probably not let you produce attractive output. But we have to start somewhere.

To add a print queue to lpd, you must add an entry in `/etc/printcap`, and make the new spool directory under `/var/spool/lpd`.

An entry in `/etc/printcap` looks like:

```

# LOCAL djet500
lp|dj|deskjet:\
    :sd=/var/spool/lpd/dj:\
    :mx#0:\
    :lp=/dev/lp0:\
    :sh:

```

This defines a spool called *lp*, *dj*, or *deskjet*, spooled in the directory `/var/spool/lpd/dj`, with no per-job maximum size limit, which prints to the device `/dev/lp0`, and which does not have a banner page (with the name of the person who printed, etc) added to the front of the print job.

Go now and read the man page for [printcap](#).

The above looks very simple, but there's a catch – unless I send in files a DeskJet 500 can understand, this DeskJet will print strange things. For example, sending an ordinary Unix text file to a deskjet results in literally interpreted newlines, and gets me:

```

This is line one.
                This is line two.
                        This is line three.

```

ad nauseam. Printing a PostScript file to this spool would get a beautiful listing of the PostScript commands, printed out with this "staircase effect", but no useful output.

Clearly more is needed, and this is the purpose of filtering. The more observant of you who read the `printcap` man page might have noticed the spool attributes `if` and `of`. Well, `if`, or the input filter, is just what we need here.

If we write a small shell script called **filter** that adds carriage returns before newlines, the staircasing can be eliminated. So we have to add in an `if` line to our `printcap` entry above:

```

lp|dj|deskjet:\
    :sd=/var/spool/lpd/dj:\
    :mx#0:\
    :lp=/dev/lp0:\
    :if=/var/spool/lpd/dj/filter:\
    :sh:

```



A simple filter script might be:

```
#!/perl
# The above line should really have the whole path to perl
# This script must be executable: chmod 755 filter
while(<STDIN>){chomp $_; print "$_\r\n";};
# You might also want to end with a form feed: print "\f";
```

If we were to do the above, we'd have a spool to which we could print regular Unix text files and get meaningful results. (Yes, there are four million better ways to write this filter, but few so illustrative. You are encouraged to do this more efficiently.)

The only remaining problem is that printing plain text is really not too hot – surely it would be better to be able to print PostScript and other formatted or graphic types of output. Well, yes, it would, and it's easy to do. The method is simply an extension of the above linefeed-fixing filter.

Such a filter is called a *magic* filter. It plays the same role as the language filters of PDQ. Don't bother writing one yourself unless you print strange things – there are a good many written for you already, and most have easy-to-use interactive configuration tools. You should simply select a suitable pre-written filter:

LPD-O-Matic

Lpdomatic is a filter designed to use data from the LinuxPrinting.org printer database. It supports essentially all free software printer drivers, including regular Ghostscript drivers, Uniprint drivers, and the assorted filter programs floating around out there. It works with various strains of LPD, including stock BSD and the new VA Linux LPD, to allow option selection. (LPRng users should use the magicfilter or apsfilter packages; a special database-driven version of magicfilter is in development.)

APS Filter

apsfilter is a filter designed for use on a wide variety of Unices. It supports essentially all Ghostscript drivers. It, too, works with various strains of LPD, including stock BSD and LPRng. At the moment, this is probably the best third-party system around for non-PostScript printers.

RHS-Printfilters

RHS-Printfilters is a filter system constructed by Red Hat. It shipped beginning, I think, in version 4 of Red Hat Linux, as the backend to the easy-to-use **printtool** GUI printer configuration tool. Other distributions, including Debian, now ship the rhs-printfilters/printtool combo as a printing option. Thus this filter system is arguably the most widely deployed one.

The rhs filter system is built on an ascii database listing distributed with it. This listing supports many Ghostscript and Uniprint drivers, but not filter-style drivers. The filters constructed also do not support much in the way of user-controllable options at print time.

The **printtool** places a configuration file named postscript.cfg in the spool directory. Inside this Bourne shell-style file, each setting is a variable. In unusual cases, you can make useful changes directly to the config file which the printtool won't allow; typically this would be the specification of an unusual Ghostscript driver, or a PPD filename for the VA rhs-printfilters version.

VA Linux has made some enhancements to the rhs-printfilters system under contract from HP. With the proper versions, it is now possible to select options for Postscript printers under control of Adobe PPD files. I cover this system in Section 8.2.2.

There's one catch to such filters: older version of lpd don't run the *if* filter for remote printers, while most newer ones do (although often with no arguments). The version of LPD shipped with modern GNU/Linux and FreeBSD distributions does; most commercial unices that still ship LPD have a version that does not. See the section on network printing later in this document for more information on this. If you only have locally-connected printers, then this won't affect you.

8.2.2. LPD for PostScript Printers

While most versions of LPD don't gracefully handle PostScript (nevermind user options), VA Linux recently modified LPD and Red Hat's filtering software to support PostScript printers fairly well. For the moment, this system works only with Red Hat 6.2, although the packages could be easily adapted for other distributions.

8.2.2.1. How it works

VA's new system uses Postscript Printer Definition, or PPD, files. PPD files are provided by printer manufacturers and declare the available options on a printer, along with the Postscript code needed to activate them. With the VA system, the normal LPD scheme works a little differently:

1. The user can specify options with the `-o` flag. For example, you might specify `-o MediaType:Transparency` if you were about to print on overhead film. Alternatively, the front-end GPR



- can be used to specify options in a dialog box; you can see screenshots of GPR in [Section 3.3.1](#).
- 2. LPR passes the options to LPD as an extended attribute in the LPD control file.
- 3. A modified version of the `rhs-printfilters` package is given the extended options data in an environment variable, and uses `ppdfilt` to add these options to the print data.

8.2.2.2. Obtaining and Installing

You can obtain RPM packages, or source tarballs, from the project's [website on SourceForge](#). For installation details, consult the project's [installation micro-HOWTO](#). In essence, you need to uninstall the Red Hat version of `printtool`, `lpd`, and `rhs-printfilters` entirely, and then install the VA versions, plus `ppdfilt`, `gpr`, and a few other utilities.

You will also need PPD files for your Postscript printers. PPD files are usually fairly easy to find. VA Linux and HP distribute PPD files for many Laserjet models. Other vendors provide PPDs for their own printers, and Adobe distributes [PPD files](#) for many printers.

At the moment, much of this is a bit difficult to install. But future installation tools will build upon the printer configuration library `libprinterconf`, which enables both the autodetection and `rhs-printfilter` configuration of both networked and local printers.



It is possible to use GPR alone, without the modified LPD or even `rhs-printfilters`. GPR can be compiled with all the logic needed to massage Postscript jobs directly. This may be an easier-to-install option suitable for people who never really need to print using `lpr` directly.

8.2.2.3. Controlling Postscript Options

Once you've setup VA's Postscript-capable LPD system, you can control your printer's options in two ways:

With the GUI

To use GPR, you first make sure that you've specified the proper PPD file. Then the printer's options will be available on the 'Advanced' panel. Basic `ppdfilt` options will be available on the 'Common' panel.

With the command line

This `lpr` supports the `-o` option. You may specify any option/value pair from your printer's PPD file with `-o`. For example, consider this PPD file option clause:

```
*OpenUI *PrintQuality/Print Quality: PickOne
*DefaultPrintQuality: None
*OrderDependency: 150 AnySetup *PrintQuality
*PrintQuality None/Printer Setting: ""
*PrintQuality Quick/QuickPrint: "<< /DeviceRenderingInfo ...
*PrintQuality Normal/Normal: "<< /DeviceRenderingInfo << /...
*PrintQuality Pres/Presentation: "<< /DeviceRenderingInfo ...
*PrintQuality Image/1200 Image Quality: "<< /DeviceRenderi...
*CloseUI: *PrintQuality
```

For the option `PrintQuality`, the possible values are `Quick`, `Normal`, `Pres`, or `Image`. You might give a command like:

```
% lpr -o PrintQuality:Image file.ps
```

There are a number of options common to all printers which will work in addition to the ones from your PPD. These include:

page-ranges

You can specify a range of pages to print. For example, `page-ranges: 2-3`.

page-set

You can print only odd or even pages. For example, `page-set: odd`.

number-up

You can print multiple pages on each piece of paper. For example, `number-up: 2`.

Other options are detailed in the `ppdfilt` man page.

8.2.3. File Permissions

By popular demand, I include below a listing of the permissions on interesting files on my system. There are a number of better ways to do this, ideally using only SGID binaries and not making everything SUID root, but this is how my system came out of the box, and it works for me. (Quite frankly, if your vendor can't even ship a working `lpd` you're in for a rough ride).

```
-r-sr-sr-x  1 root    lp      /usr/bin/lpr*
```



```
-r-sr-sr-x  1 root    lp    /usr/bin/lprm*
-rwxr--r--  1 root    root   /usr/sbin/lpd*
-r-xr-sr-x  1 root    lp    /usr/sbin/lpc*
drwxrwxr-x  4 root    lp    /var/spool/lpd/
drwxr-xr-x  2 root    lp    /var/spool/lpd/lp/
```

Lpd must currently be run as root so that it can bind to the low-numbered lp service port. It should probably become UID lp.lp or something after binding, but I don't think it does. This is simply one more reason to avoid the stock BSD LPD.

PDQ uses a different, non-daemon-centric scheme, so it has different programs. The only SUID root programs are the lpd interface programs **lpd_cancel**, **lpd_print**, and **lpd_status**; these are SUID because actual Unix print servers require print requests to originate from a privileged port. If the only printers for which you use PDQ's `bsd-lpd` interface are networked print servers (like the HP JetDirect or Lexmark's MarkNet adapters) then you do not need the SUID bit on these programs.

8.3. Large Installations

Large installations, by which I mean networks including more than two printers or hosts, have special needs. Below are some tips. For really large environments, merely distributing printcap/filter information becomes a difficult problem; the [Cisco Enterprise Print System](#) addresses this and is probably either a good starting point or a nearly complete solution, depending on your needs. Medium to large environments can be well supported by native LPRng features.

- Each printer should have a single point of control, where an administrator can pause, reorder, or redirect the queue. To implement this, have everyone printing to a local server, which will then queue jobs and direct them to the proper printer. For large campuses or distributed networks, have one server per building or other suitable network subset.
- Use LPRng, at least on servers; the BSD LPD is too buggy for "real" use. So is CUPS, at least right now in mid-2000. But don't take my word for it you should test a number of spoolers and see which suits you best.
- Client systems should not have unique printing configurations. To implement this, use LPRng's extended printcap syntax so that you have one printcap to use everywhere. CEPS provides for this by building atop a lightweight distributed database instead of traditional printcap files.
- Print queues should not be named for make or model; name print queues for something sensible like location (`floor2_nw`) or capability (`color_transparency`). Three years from now, when a printer breaks, you will be able to replace it with a different make or model without causing confusion.
- Operate a web page which shows detailed information on each printer, including location, capabilities, etc. Consider having it show the queue and include a button to remove jobs from the queue. Complex networked environments are unmanageable for users without proper documentation.
- On Unix systems, use PDQ or the like to allow selection of print job attributes such as duplex or paper size, and to force users to run all Ghostscript processing under the proper user ID. If you have all Postscript printers (as is best), you can also select from the GPR or XPP front-ends; both are prettier.
- On Windows and Apple systems, use either the platform-specific drivers *everywhere* (Samba supports the Windows automagical driver-download mechanism) or, better, use generic Postscript drivers *everywhere*. Do not mix and match; primitive word processors often produce different output when the installed printer driver changes; users cannot deal with output that varies depending on the particular client/printer pair.
- If at all possible, buy a large-volume printer for large-volume printing. If on a budget, use LPRng's multiple printers/one queue facility and assign a babysitter; printers are complex mechanical devices that will often jam and run out of paper in such configurations.
- Do not feel that printers must be plugged into workstations; Ethernet "print servers" now cost under \$100. The ability to locate printers anywhere you can network is a big improvement over forced location near a host; locate printers in sensible, central locations.
- Use any SNMP trap or other monitoring/alert facility available to you – someone should be tasked with running around and fixing printers with no ink or paper. Npadmin (see [Section 11.10.1](#)) can be used to do some management operations with SNMP printers.

8.4. Accounting

Regular LPD provides very little to help you with accounting. You can specify the name of an accounting file in the `af` printcap attribute, but this is merely passed as an argument to your `if` filter. It's up to you to make your `if` filter write entries to the accounting file, and up to you to process the accounting file later (the traditional format is mainly useful for line printers, and is nontrivial to parse in Perl, so there's no reason to preserve it). Also, if you're using my **lpdomatic** program as your filter, you'll need to make changes, since it depends on being given a configuration file as the "accounting" file name.



Ghostscript provides a PageCount operator that you can use to count the number of pages in each job; basically you just tack a few lines of postscript onto the end of the job to write an accounting file entry; for the best example of this see the file `unix-lpr.sh` in the Ghostscript source distribution.

Note that the **unix-lpr** implementation of accounting writes to a file from the Ghostscript interpreter, and is thus incompatible with the recommended `-dSAFER` option. A better solution might be to query the printer with a PDL command after each job, or to write a postscript snippet that prints the pagecount on stdout, where it can be captured without having to write to a file.

The LPRng print spooler includes an HP-specific sample implementation of accounting; I assume that it queries the printer with PDL. This technique should work for most PDL, Postscript, or SNMP printers with which you have two-way communications.

If you have a networked printer that supports SNMP, you can use the `npadmin` program to query a pagecount after each job. This should work properly for all print jobs. See [Section 11.10.1](#) for more information on `npadmin`.

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9. Vendor Solutions

This section is, by definition, incomplete. Feel free to send in details of your favourite distribution. At the moment, I am aware of no distribution that supports, or even provides, the software I recommend for small users: PDQ. A few distributions now support CUPS, which is clearly the most full-featured system right now; some even use my database-driven configuration tools to do so.

There are a number of third-party packages out there designed to make printer configuration under Unix easy. These are covered in [Section 8](#); see the subsection there for your particular spooling software for pointers.

9.1. Red Hat

Red Hat has a GUI printer administration tool called `printtool` which can add remote printers and printers on local devices. It lets you choose a ghostscript-supported printer type and Unix device file to print to, then installs a print queue in `/etc/printcap` and uses a filter program from the `rhs-printfilters` package to support postscript and other common input types. This solution works fairly well, and is trivial to setup for common cases.

Red Hat 6.x shipped a BSD LPD flavor; Red Hat 7.x appears to default to using LPRng.

Where Red Hat fails is when you have a printer which isn't supported by their standard Ghostscript (which is GNU rather than Aladdin Ghostscript, and which supports fewer printers). Check in the printer compatibility list above (or [online](#)) if you find that you can't print properly with the stock Red Hat software. If your printer isn't supported by Red Hat's tools, you may need to install a contributed version of Aladdin Ghostscript, and will probably also be better off if you use the `lpdomatic` or `apsfilter` packages, which know all about the printers supported by late-model Ghostscripts, and others besides.

In future versions of Red Hat the `printtool` will be reimplemented to support a larger list of printers and with the intent to support an eventual `rhs-printfilters` replacement (the current filter has difficulty with many common printers like some non-PCL DeskJets and most Lexmarks). Some VA Linux-developed PPD features may be incorporated, as well.

9.2. Debian

Debian offers a choice between plain LPD, LPRng, or CUPS; LPRng or CUPS are probably the better choices. PDQ is provided in the unstable tree (currently called sid). Debian also offers a choice of printer configuration tools; `apsfilter` version 5 or later is probably your best bet, since that version adds support for LPRng and Ghostscript's uniprint driver scheme. Red Hat's `printtool` is also supported, for those who like GUI administration tools.

9.3. SuSE

The printing system on SuSE Linux is based on `apsfilter`, with some enhancements; SuSE's `apsfilter` will recognize all common file formats (including HTML, if `html2ps` is installed). There are two ways to setup printers on SuSE systems:

- YaST will let you configure "PostScript", "DeskJet" and "Other printers", supported by Ghostscript drivers; it's also possible to setup HP's GDI printers (DeskJet 710/720, 820, 1000, via the "ppa" package). YaST will provide `/etc/printcap` entries for every printer ("raw", "ascii", "auto" and "color", if the printer to configure is a color printer). YaST will create spool directories and it will arrange `apsfilterrc` files, where you're able to fine tune some settings (Ghostscript preloads, paper size, paper orientation, resolution, printer escape sequences, etc.). With YaST it's also possible to setup network printers (TCP/IP, Samba, or Novell Netware Printer).
- In addition SuSE includes the regular SETUP program from the original `apsfilter` package (with some enhancements); run **`lprsetup`** to invoke this configuration script. Once you get accustomed to its GUI, you'll be able to configure local and network printers.

The SuSE installation manual explains both of these setup procedures.

Wolf Rogner reported some difficulties with SuSE. Apparently the following bugs may bite:

- `Apsfilter`'s regular SETUP script is a bit broken, as are the KDE setup tools. Use YaST. [Ed: does this still apply? It's been some time since Wolf's report.]
- For networked printers that need to be fed from Ghostscript, you'll need to first uncomment the line `REMOTE_PRINTER="remote"` in `/etc/apsfilterrc`. Then run YaST to configure the printer and, under Network configurations, set up a remote printer queue.



- YaST's setup doesn't allow color laser printers, so configure a mono printer and then change mono to color everywhere in the printcap entry. You may have to rename the spool directory, too.

9.4. Caldera

Caldera ships LPRng. I have no idea what sort of setup tools they offer.

I've just signed up a Caldera employee as a maintainer of the LinuxPrinting.org database; evidently they plan to ship a CUPS and Foomatic-based print system in future releases.

9.5. Corel

Corel is Debian-based, so all the Debian facts above should still apply. In addition, they've written their own setup tool, based on the sysAPS library which in turn uses my database. They've certainly done so as part of WordPerfect.

Corel operates a printing support newsgroup named corelsupport.linux.printing. The bulk of the traffic appears to be WordPerfect and Corel Linux related.

9.6. Mandrake

As of version 7.2b1, Mandrake ships with CUPS standard. The program QtCUPS is used to provide a clean GUI administration interface. Till went to some trouble to include as many drivers as possible, and they ship CUPS PPD files build with my own [foomatic](#) interface code.

I think Earlier Mandrake versions shipped with the Red Hat printtool.

9.7. Slackware

Slackware ships with APS Filter. The apsfiler SETUP script is installed as the command `apsfilerconfig'. You should be able to get a reasonable setup by simply running that.

It's possible that Slackware includes other systems as well; I don't have it here to play with.

9.8. Other Distributions

Please send me info on what other distributions do!

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10. Ghostscript.

Ghostscript is an incredibly significant program for free software–driven printing. Most printing software under Unix generates PostScript, which is typically a \$100 option on a printer. Ghostscript, however, is free, and will generate the language of your printer from PostScript. When tied in with your PDQ printer driver declaration or **lpd** input filter, it gives you a virtual PostScript printer and simplifies life immensely.

Ghostscript is available in several forms. The commercial version of Ghostscript, called Aladdin Ghostscript, may be used freely for personal use but may not be distributed by commercial entities. It is generally a year or so ahead of the free Ghostscript; at the moment, for example, it supports many color inkjets that the older Ghostscripts do not and has rather better PDF support.

The main free version of Ghostscript is GNU Ghostscript, and is simply an aged version of Aladdin ghostscript. This somewhat awkward arrangement has allowed Aladdin to be a totally self–funded free software project; the leading edge versions are done by L Peter and a few employees, and are licensed to hardware and software vendors for use in commercial products. Unfortunately, while this scheme has provided for L Peter's continued work on Ghostscript for years, it has also inhibited the participation of the wider free software community. Driver authors, in particular, find the arrangement poor. L Peter's retirement plans mandate a larger community involvement in the project, so he is considering license changes, and has established a SourceForge project.

The third version of Ghostscript is ESP Ghostscript, maintained by Easy Software Products (authors of CUPS) under contract from Epson. ESP Ghostscript is a combination of the gimp–print driver project's drivers and GNU Ghostscript, plus assorted usability patches. This version is not yet in full swing, but it will be available soon, and will hopefully simplify life for owners of Gimp–print–driven printers.

Whatever you do with **gs**, be very sure to run it with the option for disabling file access (**–dSAFER**). PostScript is a fully functional language, and a bad PostScript program could give you quite a headache.

Speaking of PDF, Adobe's Portable Document Format (at least through 1.3) is actually little more than organized PostScript in a compressed file. Ghostscript can handle PDF input just as it does PostScript. So you can be the first on your block with a PDF–capable printer.

10.1. Invoking Ghostscript

Typically, Ghostscript will be run by whatever filter you settle upon (I recommend **apsfilter** or my own **lpdomatic** if your vendor didn't supply anything that suits you), but for debugging purposes it is often handy to run it directly.

gs –help will give a brief listing of options and available drivers (note that this list is the list of drivers compiled in, not the master list of all available drivers).

You might run **gs** for testing purposes like: ``gs <options> –q –dSAFER –sOutputFile=/dev/lp1 test.ps'.`

10.2. Ghostscript output tuning

There are a number of things one can do if Ghostscript's output is not satisfactory (actually, you can do anything you darn well please, since you have the source).

Some of these options, and others are described in the Ghostscript User Guide (the file [Use.htm](#) in the Ghostscript distribution; possibly installed under `/usr/doc` or `/usr/share/doc` on your system) are all excellent candidates for driver options in your filter system or PDQ driver declaration.

10.2.1. Output location and size

The location, size, and aspect ratio of the image on a page is controlled by the printer–specific driver in ghostscript. If you find that your pages are coming out scrunched too short, or too long, or too big by a factor of two, you might want to look in your driver's source module and adjust whatever parameters jump out at you. Unfortunately, each driver is different, so I can't really tell you what to adjust, but most of them are reasonably well commented.

10.2.2. Gamma, dotsizes, etc.

Most non–laser printers suffer from the fact that their dots are rather large. This results in pictures coming out too dark. If you experience this problem with an otherwise untunable driver, you could use your own transfer function. Simply create



the following file in the ghostscript lib-dir and add its name to the gs call just before the actual file. You may need to tweak the actual values to fit your printer. Lower values result in a brighter print. Especially if your driver uses a Floyd–Steinberg algorithm to rasterize colors, lower values (0.2 – 0.15) are probably a good choice.

```
%!  
%transfer functions for cyan magenta yellow black  
{0.3 exp} {0.3 exp} {0.3 exp} {0.3 exp} setcolortransfer
```

It is also possible to mend printers that have some kind of color fault by tweaking these values. If you do that kind of thing, I recommend using the file `colorcir.ps`, that comes with ghostscript (in the `examples/` subdirectory), as a test page.

For many of the newer color inkjet drivers, there are command–line options, or different up driver files, which implement gamma and other changes to adapt the printer to different paper types. You should look into this before playing with Postscript to fix things.

10.2.3. Color Printing in Ghostscript

Ghostscript's default color dithering is optimized for low–resolution devices. It will dither rather coarsely in an attempt to produce 60ppi output (not dpi, ppi – the "apparent" color pixels per inch you get after dithering). This produces rather poor output on modern color printers; inkjets with photo paper, in particular, are capable of much finer ppi settings.

To adjust this, use the Ghostscript option `-dDITHERPPI=x`, where `x` is the value to use. This may or may not have an effect with all drivers; many newer drivers (the Epson Stylus **stp** driver, for example) implement their own dithering and pay no attention to this setting. Some drivers can use either the regular Ghostscript or driver–specific dithering (the Canon Bubblejet **bjc600** driver, for example).

Ghostscript's dithering is in fact rather rudimentary. Many things needed for good output on modern printers are simply not available in the Ghostscript core. Various projects to fix this situation and the free software world does have the software to do so ready and waiting are hampered by Ghostscript's licensing situation and the resulting "cathedral" development style. Beginning at the [Open Source Printing Summit 2000](#), however, all the necessary people are talking, so you can expect this situation to improve shortly.

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11. Networks

One of the features of most spoolers is that they support printing over the network to printers physically connected to a different machine, or to the network directly. With the careful combination of filter scripts and assorted utilities, you can print transparently to printers on all sorts of networks.

11.1. Printing to a Unix/lpd host

To allow remote machines to print to your printer using the LPD protocol, you must list the machines in */etc/hosts.equiv* or */etc/hosts.lpd*. (Note that *hosts.equiv* has a host of other effects; be sure you know what you are doing if you list any machine there). You can allow only certain users on the other machines to print to your printer by using the *rs* attribute; read the *lpd* man page for information on this.

11.1.1. With pdq

With PDQ, you define a printer with the interface type "bsd-lpd". This interface takes arguments for the remote hostname and queue name; the printer definition wizard will prompt you for these.

11.1.2. With lpd

To print to another machine, you make an */etc/printcap* entry like this:

```
# REMOTE djet500
lp|dj|deskjet:\
    :sd=/var/spool/lpd/dj:\
    :rm=machine.out.there.com:\
    :rp=printername:\
    :sh:
```

Note that there is still a spool directory on the local machine managed by *lpd*. If the remote machine is busy or offline, print jobs from the local machine wait in the spool area until they can be sent.

11.1.3. With rlpr

You can also use *rlpr* to send a print job directly to a queue on a remote machine without going through the hassle of configuring *lpd* to handle it. This is mostly useful in situations where you print to a variety of printers only occasionally. From the announcement for *rlpr*:

Rlpr uses TCP/IP to send print jobs to *lpd* servers anywhere on a network.

Unlike *lpr*, it *does not* require that the remote printers be explicitly known to the machine you wish to print from, (e.g. through */etc/printcap*) and thus is considerably more flexible and requires less administration.

rlpr can be used anywhere a traditional *lpr* might be used, and is backwards compatible with traditional BSD *lpr*.

The main power gained by *rlpr* is the power to print remotely **from anywhere to anywhere** without regard for how the system you wish to print from was configured. *Rlpr* can work as a filter just like traditional *lpr* so that clients executing on a remote machine like netscape, xemacs, etc, etc can print to your local machine with little effort.

Rlpr is available from [Metalab](#).

11.2. Printing to a Windows or Samba printer

There is a Printing to Windows mini-HOWTO out there which has more info than there is here.

11.2.1. From PDQ

There is not a prebuilt smb interface that I am aware of, but it would be fairly easy to create using the model set by the Netatalk-based appletalk interface. Someone please create one and submit it for inclusion!

Read the Windows/LPD section below for more tips on how to do it.



11.2.2. From LPD

It is possible to direct a print queue through the `smbclient` program (part of the samba suite) to a TCP/IP based SMB print service. Samba includes a script to do this called `smbprint`. In short, you put a configuration file for the specific printer in question in the spool directory, and install the `smbprint` script as the *if*.

The `/etc/printcap` entry goes like this:

```
lp|remote-smbprinter:\
:sh:\
:lp=/dev/null:\
:sd=/var/spool/lpd/lp:\
:if=/usr/local/sbin/smbprint:
```

You should read the documentation inside the `smbprint` script for more information on how to set this up.

You can also use `smbclient` to submit a file directly to an SMB printing service without involving `lpd`. See the man page.

11.3. Printing to a NetWare Printer

The `ncpfs` suite includes a utility called `nprint` which provides the same functionality as `smbprint` but for NetWare. You can get `ncpfs` from [Metalab](#). From the LSM entry for version 0.16:

" With `ncpfs` you can mount volumes of your netware server under Linux. You can also print to netware print queues and spool netware print queues to the Un*x print spooler. You need kernel 1.2.x or 1.3.54 and above. `ncpfs` does NOT work with any 1.3.x kernel below 1.3.54. "

11.3.1. From LPD

To make `nprint` work via `lpd`, you write a little shell script to print `stdin` on the NetWare printer, and install that as the *if* for an `lpd` print queue. You'll get something like:

```
sub2|remote-NWprinter:\
:sh:\
:lp=/dev/null:\
:sd=/var/spool/lpd/sub2:\
:if=/var/spool/lpd/nprint-script:
```

The `nprint-script` might look approximately like:

```
#!/bin/sh
# You should try the guest account with no password first!
/usr/local/bin/nprint -S net -U name -P passwd -q printq-name -
```

11.4. Printing to an EtherTalk (Apple) printer

The `netatalk` package includes something like `nprint` and `smbclient`. Others have documented the procedure for printing to and from an Apple network far better than I ever will; see the [Linux Netatalk-HOWTO](#).

11.4.1. From PDQ

PDQ includes an interface declaration called "appletalk". This uses the `Netatalk` package to print to a networked Apple printer. Just select this interface in `xpdq`'s "Add printer" wizard.

11.5. Printing to a networked printer

Many printers come with an ethernet interface which you can print to directly, typically using the LPD protocol. You should follow the instructions that came with your printer or its network adaptor, but in general, such printers are "running" `lpd`, and provide one or more queues which you can print to. An HP, for example, might work with a `printcap` like:



```
lj-5|remote-hplj:\
:sh:\
:sd=/var/spool/lpd/lj-5:\
:rm=printer.name.com:\
:rp=raw:
```

or, using the PDQ `bsd-lpd` interface arguments of `REMOTE_HOST=printer.name.com` and `QUEUE=raw`.

HP Laserjet printers with JetDirect interfaces generally support two built in `lpd` queues – "raw" which accepts PCL (and possibly Postscript) and "text" which accepts straight ascii (and copes automatically with the staircase effect). If you've got a JetDirect Plus3 three-port box, the queues are named "raw1", "text2", and so forth.

Note that the ISS company has identified an assortment of denial of service attacks which hang HP Jetdirect interfaces. Most of these have been addressed beginning in Fall 98. These sorts of problems are common in embedded code; few appliance-style devices should be exposed to general Internet traffic.

In a large scale environment, especially a large environment where some printers do not support PostScript, it may be useful to establish a dedicated print server to which all machines print and on which all ghostscript jobs are run. This will allow the queue to be paused or reordered using the `topq` and `lprm` commands.

This also allows your GNU/Linux box to act as a spool server for the printer so that your network users can complete their print jobs quickly and get on with things without waiting for the printer to print any other job that someone else has sent. This is suggested too if you have unfixable older HP Jetdirects; it reduces the likelihood of the printers wedging.

To do this, set up a queue on your linux box that points at the ethernet equipped HP LJ (as above). Now set up all the clients on your LAN to point at the LPD queue (eg `lj-5` in the example above).

Some HP network printers apparently don't heed the banner page setting sent by clients; you can turn off their internally generated banner page by telnetting to the printer, hitting return twice, typing "banner: 0" followed by "quit". There are other settings you can change this way, as well; type "?" to see a list.

The full range of settings can be controlled with HP's [webJetAdmin](#) software. This package runs as a daemon, and accepts http requests on a designated port. It serves up forms and Java applets which can control HP printers on the network. In theory, it can also control Unix print queues, but it does so using the `rexec` service, which is completely unsecure. I don't advise using that feature.

11.5.1. To AppSocket Devices

Some printers (and printer networking "black boxes") support only a cheesy little non-protocol involving plain TCP connections; this is sometimes called the "AppSocket" protocol. Notable in this category are early-model JetDirect (including some JetDirectEx) cards. Basically, to print to the printer, you must open a TCP connection to the printer on a specified port (typically 9100, or 9100, 9101 and 9102 for three-port boxes) and stuff your print job into it. `LPRng` has built-in support for stuffing print jobs into random TCP ports, but with BSD `lpd` it's not so easy. The best thing is probably to obtain and use the little utility called `netcat`.

A `netcat`-using PDQ interface would look something like this:

```
interface tcp-port-0.1 {
    help "This is one of the first interfaces supported by standalone
        network printers and print servers. The device simply
        listens for a TCP connection on a certain port, and sends
        data from any connection to the printer.\nThis interface
        requires the netcat program (\\"nc\\")."

    required_args "REMOTE_HOST"

    argument {
        var = "REMOTE_HOST"
        desc = "Remote host"
        help = "This is IP name or number of the print server."
    }

    argument {
        var = "REMOTE_PORT"
        def_value = "9100"
        desc = "Remote port"
        help = "This is the TCP port number on the print server that the
            print job should be sent to. Most JetDirect cards, and
```



```
        clones, accept jobs on port 9100 (or 9101 for port 2,
        etc)."
```

```
    }
```

```
    requires "nc"
```

```
    send_exec { cat $OUTPUT | nc $REMOTE_HOST $REMOTE_PORT }
```

```
}
```

Failing that, it can be implemented, among other ways, in Perl using the program below. For better performance, use the program netcat ("nc"), which does much the same thing in a general purpose way. Most distributions should have netcat available in prepackaged form.

```
#!/usr/bin/perl
# Thanks to Dan McLaughlin for writing the original version of this
# script (And to Jim W. Jones for sitting next to Dan when writing me
# for help ;)
```

```
$fileName = @ARGV[0];
```

```
open(IN,"$fileName") || die "Can't open file $fileName";
```

```
$dpi300      = "\x1B*t300R";
$dosCr       = "\x1B&k3G";
$sends       = "\x0A";
```

```
$port = 9100 unless $port;
$them = "bach.sr.hp.com" unless $them;
```

```
$AF_INET = 2;
$SOCK_STREAM = 1;
$SIG{'INT'} = 'dokill';
$sockaddr = 'S n a4 x8';
```

```
chop($hostname = `hostname`);
($name,$aliases,$proto) = getprotobyname('tcp');
($name,$aliases,$port) = getservbyname($port,'tcp')
    unless $port =~ /\^d+$/;;
($name,$aliases,$type,$len,$thisaddr) =
    gethostbyname($hostname);
($name,$aliases,$type,$len,$thataddr) = gethostbyname($them);
$this = pack($sockaddr, $AF_INET, 0, $thisaddr);
$that = pack($sockaddr, $AF_INET, $port, $thataddr);
```

```
if (socket(S, $AF_INET, $SOCK_STREAM, $proto)) {
#   print "socket ok\n";
}
else {
    die $!;
}
# Give the socket an address.
if (bind(S, $this)) {
#   print "bind ok\n";
}
else {
    die $!;
}

# Call up the server.
if (connect(S,$that)) {
#   print "connect ok\n";
}
else {
    die $!;
}

# Set socket to be command buffered.
select(S); $| = 1; select(STDOUT);
```

```
#   print S "@PJL ECHO Hi $hostname! $sends";
#   print S "@PJL OPMSG DISPLAY=\"Job $whoami\" $sends";
#   print S $dpi300;
```

```
# Avoid deadlock by forking.
if($child = fork) {
```




```

print S $dosCr;
print S $TimesNewR;

while (<IN>) {
    print S;
}
sleep 3;
do dokill();
} else {
    while(<S>) {
        print;
    }
}

sub dokill {
    kill 9,$child if $child;
}

```

11.6. Running an `if` for remote printers with old LPDs

One oddity of older versions of `lpd` is that the `if` is not run for remote printers. (Versions after 0.43 or so have the change originated on FreeBSD such that the `if` is always run). If you find that you need to run an `if` for a remote printer, and it isn't working with your `lpr`, you can do so by setting up a double queue and requeueing the job. As an example, consider this `printcap`:

```

lj-5:\
    :lp=/dev/null:sh:\
    :sd=/var/spool/lpd/lj-5:\
    :if=/usr/lib/lpd/filter-lj-5:
lj-5-remote:sh:rm=printer.name.com:\
    :rp=raw:sd=/var/spool/lpd/lj-5-raw:

```

in light of this `filter-lj-5` script:

```

#!/bin/sh
gs <options> -q -dSAFER -sOutputFile=- - | \
    lpr -Plj-5-remote -U$5

```

The `-U` option to `lpr` only works if `lpr` is run as daemon, and it sets the submitter's name for the job in the resubmitted queue correctly. You should probably use a more robust method of getting the username, since in some cases it is not argument 5. See the man page for [printcap](#).

11.7. From Windows.

Printing from a Windows (or presumably, OS/2) client to a Un*x server is directly supported over SMB through the use of the SAMBA package, which also supports file sharing of your Un*x filesystem to Windows clients.

Samba includes fairly complete documentation, and there is a good Samba FAQ which covers it, too. You can either configure a magic filter on the Un*x box and print PostScript to it, or run around installing printer-specific drivers on all the Windows machines and having a queue for them with no filters at all. Relying on the Windows drivers may in some cases produce better output, but is a bit more of an administrative hassle if there are many Windows boxen. So try Postscript first. Modern versions of Samba should support the automagical driver download mechanism offered by Windows NT servers to deal with this problem.

With PDQ, you should configure Samba to run the `pdq` command with appropriate arguments instead of the `lpr` command that it defaults to running. I believe that Samba will run `pdq` as the proper user, so it should work well this way. There are several Samba options that you should adjust to do this:

printcap

This should point to a "fake" `printcap` you whip up listing available printers. All you need is a short and long name for each printer, one per line:

```

lp1|Printer One
lp2|Printer Two
lp3|Printer Three

```

The short name will be used as the printer name for the `print` command:

print command



This will need to be set to something like `pdq -P %p %s ; rm %s`.

lprm command

There doesn't seem to be a good value for this setting at the moment. PDQ's queued jobs will expire after a time, so if the printer is totally gone there's no problem. If you just change your mind, you can use **xpdq** to cancel jobs, but this is inconvenient from Windows. Just put a do-nothing command like **true** for now. If you use **lpd** or **LPRng** as the back-end, then a suitable **lprm** command should work. I'm not sure how Samba would identify the **lpr** queue entry number for a **pdq**-submitted job.

lpq command

Again, PDQ doesn't offer a good value to put here. Distributed systems don't offer a sensible way to see the queue, but samba-centric centralized server systems want to have a queue worth examining. Just put a do-nothing command like **true** for now. If you use **LPD** or **LPRng** as the back-end, then a suitable **lpq** command should work; you just won't see jobs until they're done being filtered by PDQ.

11.8. From an Apple.

Netatalk supports printing from Apple clients over EtherTalk. See the [Netatalk HOWTO Page](#) for more information.

Really, though, any modern Mac can print over TCP/IP using the **LPD** protocol just fine. **UVa** provides a very nice [support page](#) detailing how to set this up.

11.9. From Netware.

The **ncpfs** package includes a daemon named **pserver** which can be used to provide service to a NetWare print queue. From what I understand, this system requires a Bindery-based NetWare, ie 2.x, 3.x, or 4.x with bindery access enabled.

For more information on **ncpfs** and it's **pserver** program, see [the ncpfs FTP site](#).

11.10. Networked Printer Administration

Most networked printers support some method of remote administration. Often there are easy-to-use web pages for configuration. More usefully, there is often support for **SNMP** management. Typically you can find out interesting information on printer status like ink and paper levels, print volumes, and so forth, and you can usually change certain settings. **SNMP** printer control, and a number of other printing-related things, are being standardized by the IEEE's [Printer Working Group](#)

11.10.1. npadmin

Npadmin is a command-line program which offers an interface to the common **SNMP** functionality of networked printers. It implements the standard **Printer MIB**, as well as a few vendor-proprietary schemes used mainly for older devices. Both printer-discovery style actions and various printer status queries are supported.

npadmin has an excellent [man page](#), and precompiled packages are distributed for a number of **RPM** and **dpkg** based distributions.

11.10.2. Other SNMP tools

Besides **npadmin**, there are a number of **SNMP** tools that will be useful. **snmptraplogd** can log **SNMP** trap events. This is useful for observing printer jams, out of paper events, etc; it would be straightforward to retransmit certain events to a pager, or to send an email.

While **npadmin** provides simplified support for many network printers' **SNMP** interfaces, some printers may have vendor extensions which **npadmin** doesn't know about. In this case, you can use the **CMU SNMP** tools, which support arbitrary **SNMP** **GET** and **SET** operations, as well as walks and the like. With these, and a bit of work, you can make use of any **SNMP** feature offered by your printer's **MIB**. You may need to obtain a **MIB** from your vendor to figure out what all the variables are; sometimes vendors think that people actually use the proprietary tools they ship.

VA Linux's libprinterconf includes code to perform network printer discovery. Printers are identified against a compiled-in library of printer signatures; at the moment the library is not large, but does cover many common networked printer models.





12. Windows-only printers

As I discussed earlier, some printers are inherently unsupported because they don't speak a normal printer language, instead using the computer's CPU to render a bitmap which is then piped to the printer at a fixed speed. In a few cases, these printers also speak something normal like PCL, but often they do not. In some (really low-end) cases, the printer doesn't even use a normal parallel connection but relies on the vendor's driver to emulate what should be hardware behaviour (most importantly flow control).

In any case, there are a few possible workarounds if you find yourself stuck with such a lemon.

12.1. The Ghostscript Windows redirector

There is now a Ghostscript printer driver available (called **mswinpr2**) that will print using Windows GDI calls. There is also a port redirection tool called **redmon** which will run a print job through Ghostscript before finally printing it. (Rather like an `if` filter in Unix's LPD). Taken all together, this allows a Windows machine to print PostScript to a Windows-only printer through the vendor's driver.

If you have a host-based printer that can't be used directly, you can export it as a "Postscript" printer by using **redmon**, **Ghostscript**, and **mswinpr2** on a Windows PC and print through the vendor's drivers.

12.2. HP Winprinters

Some HP printers use "Printing Performance Architecture" (marketingspeak for "we were too cheap to implement PCL"). This is supported in a roundabout way via the **pbm2ppa** translator written by Tim Norman. Basically, you use **ghostscript** to render PostScript into a bitmapped image in **pbm** format and then use **pbm2ppa** to translate this into a printer-specific **ppa** format bitmap ready to be dumped to the printer. This program may also come in **ghostscript** driver format by now.

The **ppa** software can be had from [the ppa home page](#); **pbm2ppa** supports some models of the HP 720, 820, and 1000; read the documentation that comes with the package for more details on **ppa** printer support.

12.3. Lexmark Winprinters

Most of the cheap Lexmark inkjets use a proprietary language and are therefore Winprinters. However, Henryk Paluch has written a program which can print on a Lexmark 7000. Hopefully he'll be able to figure out color and expand support to other Lexmark inkjets. See [here](#) for more info.

Similarly, there are now drivers for the 5700, 1000, 1100, 2070, 3200, and others. See the supported printers listing above, and my web site, for more information on obtaining these drivers.

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13. How to print to a fax machine.

You can print to a fax machine with, or without, a modem.

13.1. Using a faxmodem

There are a number of fax programs out there that will let you fax and receive documents. One of the most powerful is Sam Leffler's HylaFAX. It supports all sorts of things from multiple modems to broadcasting.

SuSE ships a Java HylaFax client which allegedly works on any Java platform (including Windows and GNU/Linux). There are also non-Java fax clients for most platforms; GNU/Linux can almost certainly handle your network faxing needs.

Also available, and a better choice for smaller installations, is **efax**, a simple program which sends and receives faxes. The getty program **mgetty** can receive faxes using **efax** (and do voicemail or interactive logins).

13.1.1. Faxing from PDQ

PDQ doesn't ship with a fax interface declaration, but here's a simple one (which is only partly tested):

```
interface efax-0.1 {
    help "This interface uses the efax package's fax program to send a
        fax.  You should first get efax's \"fax send\" working by
        itself by editing the file /etc/efax.rc and testing.  Connect
        this interface to a generic postscript driver to define a
        fax machine \"printer\"."

    requires { "efax" "fax" }

    # Making phone number required means that the add printer wizard
    # will demand a phone number at add printer time.  This is
    # undesirable, so it isn't explicitly required, even though it is
    # logically required.  The send_exec script checks for the number.
    # You could skip the wizard by adding this printer by hand to
    # .printrc, mark this as required, and it might then prompt?
    argument {
        var = "PHONE_NUMBER"
        desc = "Phone Number"
        help = "The phone number to dial.  Prefixes like 9 ought to be
            defined in your /etc/efax.rc file."
    }

    option {
        var = "RESOLUTION"
        desc = "Fax resolution"
        default_choice = "high"
        choice "low" {
            value = "-l"
            desc = "Low"
            help = "Low resolution on a fax is 96lpi."
        }
        choice "high" {
            value = ""
            desc = "High"
            help = "High resolution on a fax is 192lpi."
        }
    }
}

# If you don't specify a phone number the job just fails, and
# the only way to figure this out is to look at the error message
# at the bottom of the job details.  Hmm.
send_exec {
    if [ "x$PHONE_NUMBER" != "x" ]
    then
        fax send $RESOLUTION $PHONE_NUMBER $INPUT
    else
        echo 'You must specify a phone number!'
        false
    fi
}
```



13.2. Using the Remote Printing Service

There is an experimental service offered that lets you send an email message containing something you'd like printed such that it will appear on a fax machine elsewhere. Nice formats like postscript are supported, so even though global coverage is spotty, this can still be a very useful service. For more information on printing via the remote printing service, see the [Remote Printing WWW Site](#).

13.3. Commercial Faxing Services

A number of companies operate web-based faxing services. [EFax](#), in particular, offers free inbound faxes (to your own dedicated fax number, no less) via email, and fax transmission for a fee. Other companies offer similar services.

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14. How to generate something worth printing.

Here we get into a real rat's-nest of software. Basically, Linux can run many types of binaries with varying degrees of success: Linux/x86, Linux/Alpha, Linux/Sparc, Linux/foo, iBCS, Win16/Win32s (with dosemu and, someday, with Wine), Mac/68k (with Executor), and Java. I'll just discuss native GNU/Linux and common Un*x software.

14.1. Markup languages

Most markup languages are more suitable for large or repetitive projects, where you want the computer to control the layout of the text to make things uniform.

nroff

This was one of the first markup languages on the original version of Unix. Man pages are the most common examples of things formatted in *nroff* macros; many people swear by them, but *nroff* has, to me at least, a more arcane syntax than needed (see [Figure 11](#)), and probably makes a poor choice for new works. It is worth knowing, though, that you can typeset a man page directly into postscript with *groff*. Most man commands will do this for you with `man -t foo | lpr`.

Figure 11. Example of *nroff* Input

```
.B man
is the system's manual pager. Each
.I page
argument given to
.B man
is normally the name of a program, utility or function.
The
.I manual page
associated with each of these arguments is then found and
displayed. A
.IR section ,
if provided, will direct
.B man
to look
only in that
.I section
of the manual.
```

TeX

TeX, and the macro package LaTeX, are one of the most widely used markup languages on Un*x systems, although TeX did not originate on Unix and is available to run on a wide variety of systems. Technical works are frequently written in LaTeX because it greatly simplifies the layout issues and is *still* one of the few text processing systems to support mathematics both completely and well. TeX's output format is `dvi`, and is converted to PostScript or Hewlett Packard's PCL with `dvips` or `dvilj`. If you wish to install TeX or LaTeX, install the whole TeX group of packages; it contains everything. Recent TeX installations include pdfTeX and pdfLaTeX, which produce Adobe PDF files directly. Commands are available to create hyperlinks and navigation features in the PDF file.

Figure 12. Example of LaTeX Input

```
\subsubsection{NAT}

Each real server is assigned a different IP address, and the NA
implements address translation for all inbound and outbound
packets.

\begin{description}
\item[Advantage] Implementation simplicity, especially if we
already implement other NAT capabilities.

\item[Disadvantage] Return traffic from the server goes through
address translation, which may incur a speed penalty. This
probably isn't too bad if we design for it from the
beginning.

\item[Disadvantage] NAT breaks the end-to-end semantics of normal
internet traffic. Protocols like ftp, H.323, etc would
require special support involving snooping and in-stream
rewriting, or complete protocol proxying; neither is likely
to be practical.
\end{description}
```



SGML

There is at least one free SGML parser available for Un*x systems; it forms the basis of Linuxdoc-SGML's homegrown document system. It can support other DTD's, as well, most notably DocBook. This document is written in DocBook-DTD SGML; see [Figure 13](#) for an example.

Figure 13. Example of DocBook SGML

```
<VarListEntry>
<Term>SGML</Term>
<ListItem>
<Para>
  There is at least one free SGML parser available for Un*x
  systems; it forms the basis of Linuxdoc-SGML's homegrown
  document system. It can support other DTD's, as well, most
  notably DocBook. This document is written in DocBook-DTD
  SGML.
</Para>
</ListItem>
</VarListEntry>
```

14.2. WYSIWYG Word Processors

There is no shortage of WYSIWYG word processing software. Several complete office suites are available, including one that's free for personal use (StarOffice).

StarOffice

Sun Microsystems is distributing StarOffice on the net free for GNU/Linux. This full-blown office suite has all the features you'd expect, including both import and export of Microsoft Office file formats (including Word documents). There's a mini-HOWTO out there which describes how to obtain and install it. It generates PostScript, so should work with most any printer that works otherwise on GNU/Linux.

WordPerfect

Corel distributes a basic version of WordPerfect 8 free for GNU/Linux, and sells various packages of WordPerfect Office 2000 (which includes WordPerfect, Corel Draw and Quattro Pro Versions 9). The [Linux WordPerfect Fonts and Printers](#) page has information about configuring WordPerfect for use with either Ghostscript or its built-in printer drivers (which are apparently identical the DOS WordPerfect drivers, if your printer's driver isn't included in the distribution).

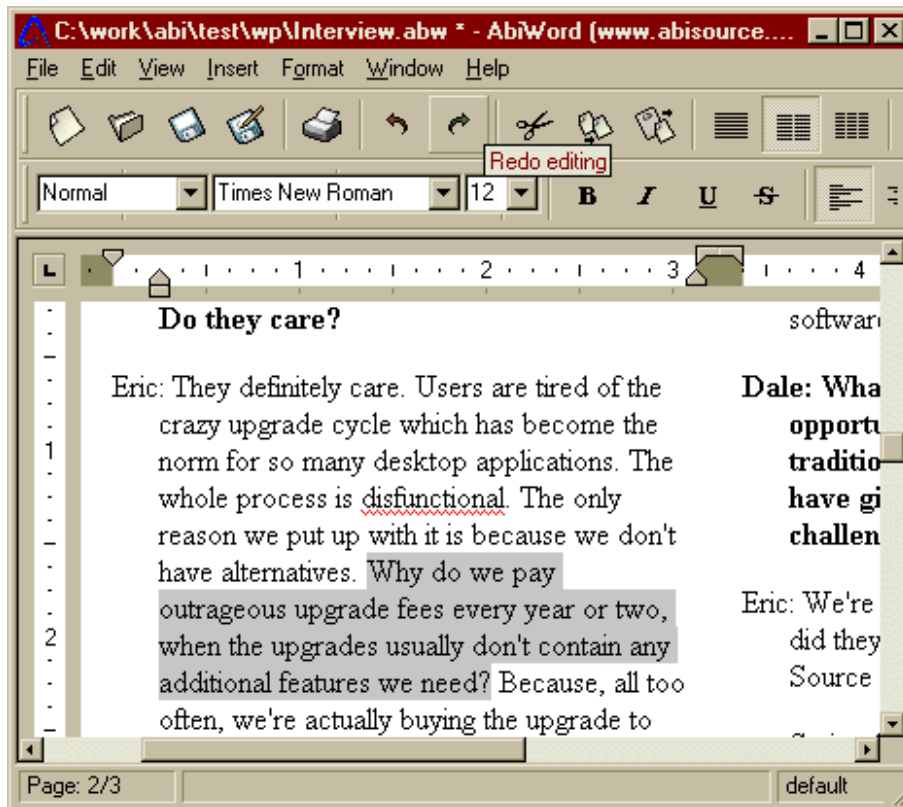
Applix

Applix is a cross-platform (ie, various Unices, Windows, and others) office suite sold by the Applix company. Red Hat and SuSE sold it themselves when it was the only game in town; now sales have reverted to Applix. This is the only native Unix-style application suite; it probably fits in better with the Unix way of doing things.

AbiWord

[AbiWord](#) is one of several GPL WYSIWYG word processor projects; this one has produced a very nice word processor based on an XML format. It is capable of Word file import. AbiWord is still a work in progress, although it is useful for small things now.

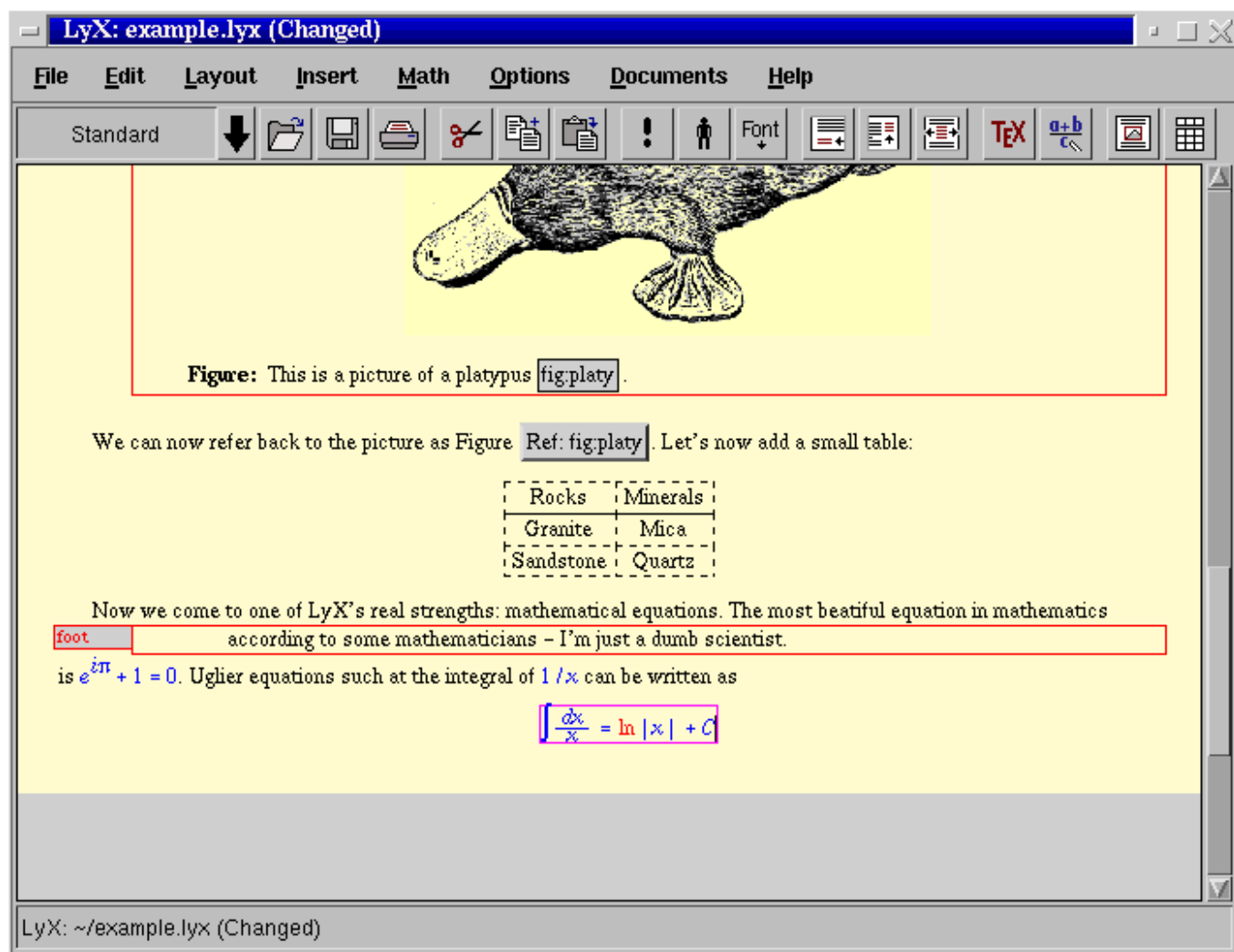
Figure 14. AbiWord



LyX

LyX is a front-end to LaTeX which looks very promising. See the [LyX Homepage](#) for more information. There is a KDE-styled version of LyX, called Klyx; the author of LyX and the instigator of KDE are the same person.

Figure 15. LyX



Maxwell

Maxwell is a simple MS RTF-format based word processor which started as a commercial product but is now distributed under the GPL.

Other vendors should feel free to drop me a line with your offerings.

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15. Printing Photographs

There are many details to getting decent photo output from common printers. If you haven't bought a photo printer yet, see the photo-related tips in [Section 5.4](#).

15.1. Ghostscript and Photos

Ghostscript has some difficulties rendering color photographs through most drivers. The problems are several:

- Many drivers have poorly tuned color support. Often the colors don't match the Windows driver output or the screen. OTOH, all drivers, and Ghostscript as a whole, have readily adjustable color support; the "Gamma" settings (see [Section 10.2.2](#)) are one thing to play with, and there are others documented in Ghostscript's `Use.htm` documentation file.
- I'm only aware of one Ghostscript driver with support for 6 and 7 color printing; it's in beta at the moment and supports most Epson Stylus Photo models. It is rumoured to produce better color than the Windows driver (!). The Ghostscript driver core itself provides no support for non CMYK or RGB colors; arguably, some work to put that there is needed.
- Ghostscript often ends up dithering coarsely, or generating printouts with artifacts like banding. The dithering can usually be corrected; see [Section 10.2.3](#), and read the documentation for your driver.

You should be able to correct some of these problems by tuning Ghostscript; see [Section 10](#) for more information on how to do this. Fiddling with Ghostscript options is much easier if you declare them as options in your spooling system.

That said, the obvious solution for now is to use non-Ghostscript software for printing photos, and indeed, such things do exist. The main contender is the print plugin in the Gimp, which supports pixel-for-pixel printing on Epson Styluses and Postscript printers (with basic PPD support). That Epson Stylus portion of that driver is available for Ghostscript, as well, as the `stp` driver. Also possible to use for this purpose are the assorted external `pnm-to-foo` programs used to print on printers like the cheap Lexmarks; these print attempt to print pixmaps pixel-for-pixel.

The best solution, of course, is to buy a Postscript printer; such printers can usually be completely controlled from available free software, and will print to the full capability of the printer.

15.2. Paper

Color inkjets are extremely dependent on the paper for good output. The expensive glossy coated inkjet papers will allow you to produce near-photographic output, while plain uncoated paper will often produce muddy colors and fuzzy details. Nonglossy coated inkjet papers will produce results in between, and are probably best for final prints of text, as well. Stiffer glossy coated "photo" papers will produce similar output to lighter-weight glossy papers, but will feel like a regular photo.

15.3. Printer Settings

For photo output on most color inkjets, you should use the most highly interlaced (and slowest) print mode; otherwise solid regions may have banding or weak colors. Generally with Ghostscript this is what will happen when you pick the highest resolution. With Postscript printers, you may need to add a snippet to the prologue based on the settings available in the PPD file. The Gimp's PPD support doesn't include (printer-specific) print quality settings, but I added one in an ugly way for my own use; contact me if you'd like that. If you use PDQ or CUPS, you can easily control all the printer settings you need. VA Linux's `libppd` and the GPR front-end can also add these options for Postscript printers.

15.4. Print Durability

Color inkjet printouts usually fade after a few years, especially if exposed to lots of light and air; this is a function of the ink. Printers with ink-only consumables like the Epsoms and Canons can buy archival inks, which are less prone to this problem. Newer printers often use pigment-based inks, which don't fade as much as the older dye-based ink did. No inkjet output is really particularly good for long-term archival use. Write the bits to a CD-R and store that instead.

15.5. Shareware and Commercial Software



There's a program called [xwtools](#) which supports photo printing with all the bells and whistles on an assortment of Epson, HP, and Canon printers. Unfortunately, it was written under NDA, so comes without source. Unless you use it for the Epson Stylus Color 300 on GNU/Linux x86, it costs E15 for personal use; commercial pricing is unknown.

The ESP Print Pro package from Easy Software supports some printers which might otherwise be unsupported. These drivers are not reported to be very well-tuned for photos, but they do work.

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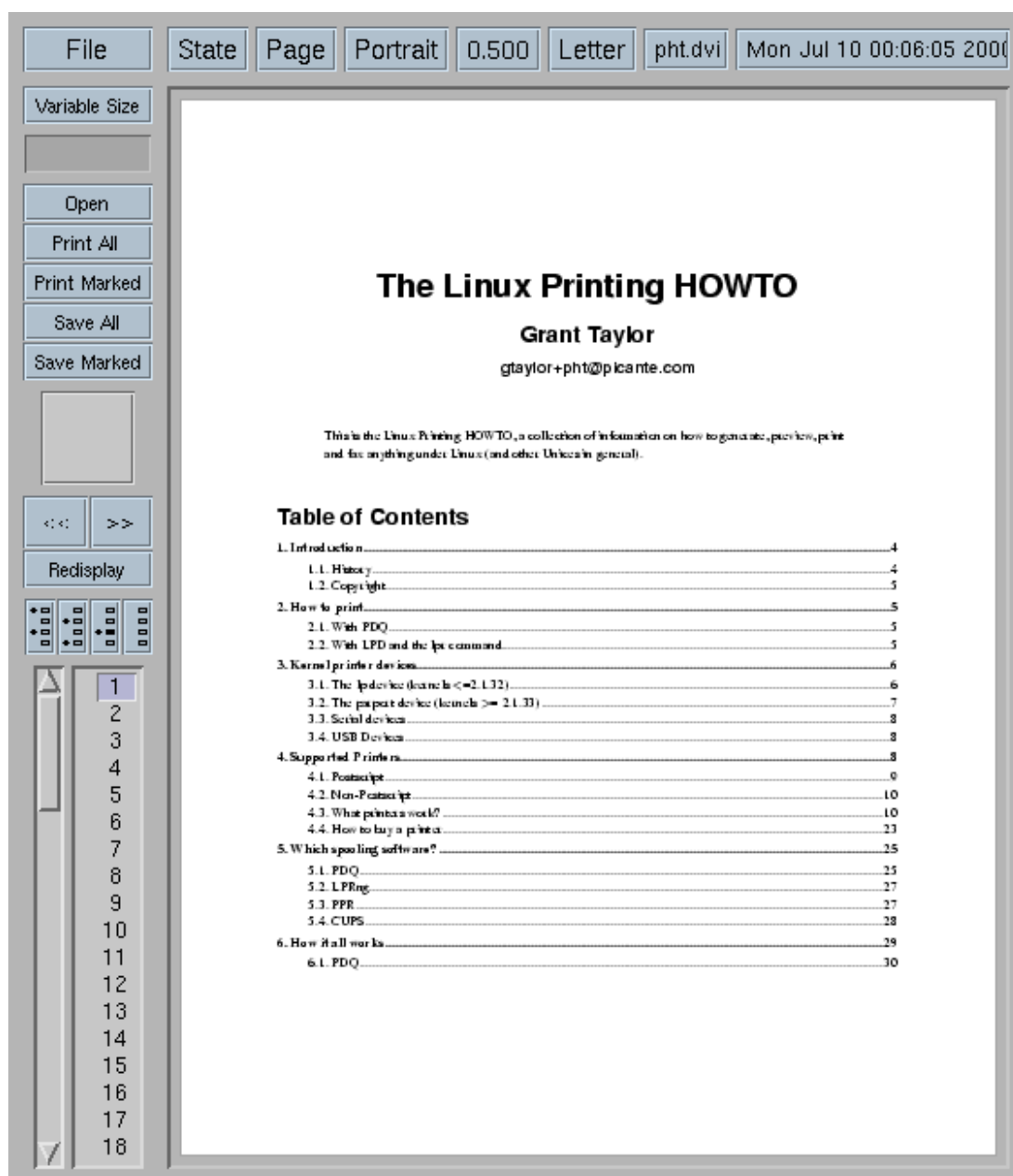
16. On-screen previewing of printable things.

Nearly anything you can print can be viewed on the screen, too.

16.1. PostScript

Ghostscript has an X11 driver best used under the management of the PostScript previewer `gv`. The latest versions of these programs should be able to view PDF files, as well. Note that `gv` has replaced the older previewer "Ghostview"; the new user interface is much prettier and featureful than ghostview's plain old Athena GUI.

Figure 16. Gv



16.2. TeX dvi



TeX DeVice Independent files may be previewed under X11 with [xdvi](#). Modern versions of xdvi call ghostscript to render PostScript specials.

A VT100 driver exists as well. It's called `dgvt`. `Tmview` works with GNU/Linux and `svgalib`, if that's all you can do.

16.3. Adobe PDF

Adobe's Acrobat Reader is available for GNU/Linux; just download it from the [Adobe web site](#).

You can also use `xpdf`, which is free software, and I believe `gv` supports viewing PDF files with `gs` under X11.

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17. Serial printers under lpd

Serial printers are rather tricky under lpd.

17.1. Setting up in printcap

Lpd provides five attributes which you can set in */etc/printcap* to control all the settings of the serial port a printer is on. Read the *printcap* man page and note the meanings of *br#*, *fc#*, *xc#*, *fs#* and *xs#*. The last four of these attributes are bitmaps indicating the settings for use the port. The *br#* attribute is simply the baud rate, ie *`br#9600'*.

It is very easy to translate from *stty* settings to printcap flag settings. If you need to, see the man page for *stty* now.

Use *stty* to set up the printer port so that you can cat a file to it and have it print correctly. Here's what *`stty -a'* looks like for my printer port:

```
dina:/usr/users/andy/work/lpd/lpd# stty -a < /dev/ttyS2
speed 9600 baud; rows 0; columns 0; line = 0;
intr = ^C; quit = ^\; erase = ^?; kill = ^U; eof = ^D; eol = <undef>;
eol2 = <undef>; start = ^Q; stop = ^S; susp = ^Z; rprnt = ^R; werase = ^W;
lnext = ^V; min = 1; time = 0;
-parenb -parodd cs8 hupcl -cstopb cread -clocal -crtscts
-ignbrk -brkint -ignpar -parmrk -inpck -istrip -inlcr
-igncr -icrnl ixon -ixoff -iuclic -ixany -imaxbel
-opost -olcuc -ocrnl -onlcr -onocr -onlret -ofill -ofdel nl0 cr0 tab0
bs0 vt0 ff0
-isig -icanon -iexten -echo -echoe -echok -echonl -noflsh -xcase
-tostop -echoprtr -echoctl -echoke
```

The only changes between this and the way the port is initialized at bootup are *-clocal*, *-crtscts*, and *ixon*. Your port may well be different depending on how your printer does flow control.

You actually use *stty* in a somewhat odd way. Since *stty* operates on the terminal connected to it's standard input, you use it to manipulate a given serial port by using the *`<'* character as above.

Once you have your *stty* settings right, so that *`cat file > /dev/ttyS2'* (in my case) sends the file to the printer, look at the file */usr/src/linux/include/asm-i386/termbits.h*. This contains a lot of *#defines* and a few structs (You may wish to cat this file to the printer (you do have that working, right?) and use it as scratch paper). Go to the section that starts out

```
/* c_cflag bit meaning */
#define CBAUD 0000017
```

This section lists the meaning of the *fc#* and *fs#* bits. You will notice that the names there (after the baud rates) match up with one of the lines of *stty* output. Didn't I say this was going to be easy?

Note which of those settings are preceded with a *-* in your *stty* output. Sum up all those numbers (they are octal). This represents the bits you want to clear, so the result is your *fc#* capability. Of course, remember that you will be setting bits directly after you clear, so you can just use *`fc#0177777'* (I do).

Now do the same for those settings (listed in this section) which do not have a *-* before them in your *stty* output. In my example the important ones are CS8 (0000060), HUPCL (0002000), and CREAD (0000200). Also note the flags for your baud rate (mine is 0000015). Add those all up, and in my example you get 0002275. This goes in your *fs#* capability (*`fs#02275'* works fine in my example).

Do the same with set and clear for the next section of the include file, "c_lflag bits". In my case I didn't have to set anything, so I just use *`xc#0157777'* and *`xs#0'*.

17.2. Older serial printers that drop characters

Jon Luckey points out that some older serial printers with ten-cent serial interfaces and small buffers *really* mean stop when they say so with flow control. He found that disabling the FIFO in his Linux box's 16550 serial port with *setserial* corrected the problem of dropped characters (you apparently just specify the uart type as an 8250 to do this).

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18. What's missing?

Many of the parts for a complete printing system do not exist yet. Projects are underway to address most of these, although most have not yet produced running useful code, and efforts to standardize the necessary protocols and APIs are in their infancy.

18.1. Plumbing

There's a general problem with getting all the parts to talk to one another; especially in a spooler-independent way. This problem manifests itself most noticeably in the pathetic application support for control over all the "usual" printing features. There is simply no way for an application writer to get information about printers, jobs, etc; no standardized way to submit jobs; no good way to get job status back; nor even really a standardized way to generate print data (although most of the new desktop systems offer desktop-specific facilities for doing this).

Work to define a sensible API for applications to use for printing will undoubtedly center around Corel's sysAPS library, which provides a rudimentary implementation of several queueing and printer information features.

18.2. Fonts

Font handling on free systems is rather awkward. The display, the printer, the application, and the data files should ideally all have access to the same fonts. Unfortunately this is simply not the case. Plans are afoot to remove font handling from the X server, simplifying part of the problem, but good printer font to application font mapping is still a problem. No project really seems to be underway to address this; currently application writers simply embed their own fonts into printed data.

18.3. Metadata

Applications or spoolers need to learn about printer and driver properties somehow. The current standardized scheme, implemented on Windows, the Mac, and in CUPS, is to use Postscript Printer Description files to drive a programatic interface and user interface. This had trouble for non-Postscript printers, for obvious reasons, so the IEEE's Printer Working Group has a project to specify "Universal Printer Driver Format", or UPDF, files. Thus far they have constructed a sample file in an XML format. The sample file strongly resembles a PPD file, and is missing all sorts of driver and platform specific information; so much so that UPDF is currently not useful. IBM has a fully parameterized driver architecture for OS/2 which is available as free software; once this is released it is bound to be a useful source of ideas or code, and possibly a good enough system to just use outright. Even this system, however, provides no defined mechanism for communicating interesting properties from the driver space up to the application. Some XML format, and/or an API for fetching assorted properties, is bound to appear at some point.

18.4. Drivers

The state of free software drivers is rather poor. Fortunately, several projects are underway to correct this, and impressive results can now be had on printers using that code. The eventual goal seems to be to provide both good drivers and a good framework for the frequently duplicated (and hard!) parts of driver code dithering, for example to be shared.

Printer vendor cooperation will be an important part of achieving this goal. Vendors currently do not provide the minimum documentation necessary to operate their devices well. At the Printing Summit 2000, many vendors were present, and some small headway was made on this point. Vendors are mainly concerned with keeping the dithering and related algorithms secret; these software components are what produces such remarkable inkjet output, and the vendors are of course competing. Those vendors present at the summit should now have a clearer picture of how free software works and what we want from them. This isn't much; bt it sets the stage for future progress.

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19. Credits

Special thanks to Jacob Langford, author of `pdq`, who finally gave us something better than the smattering of scripts globbed onto a 20 year old overgrown line-printer control program.

The `smbprint` information is from an article by Marcel Roelofs <marcel@paragon.nl>.

The `nprint` information for using Netware printers was provided by Michael Smith <mikes@bioch.ox.ac.uk>.

The serial printers under `lpd` section is from Andrew Tefft <teffta@engr.dnet.ge.com>.

The blurb about gammas and such for `gs` was sent in by Andreas <quasi@hub-fue.franken.de>.

The two paragraphs about the 30 second `closing_wait` of the serial driver was contributed by Chris Johnson <cdj@netcom.com>.

Robert Hart sent a few excellent paragraphs about setting up a print server to networked HPs which I used verbatim.

And special thanks to the dozens upon dozens of you who've pointed out typos, bad urls, and errors in the document over the years.

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