

Re: Driving and Sailing ... where to go from here(?)

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- *From:* Jack Erbes <jackerbes@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 16 Feb 2007 12:03:41 -0500
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David wrote:

<snip>

...So I bought an USB to Serial converter. And

another. And another. After three tries, and many, many hours, I finally just gave up and returned the new laptop, because that was the main application that I wanted it for.

<snip>

Your results are uncharacteristic. I own three different serial to USB adapters and all of them worked on the first try.

The setup process for those adapters is invariably that I have to run a setup.exe program from a CD-ROM that came with the adapter to install a driver before I plug the device in.

And I generally have to lead the New Hardware Found wizard to a folder containing an *.inf file and some driver files the first time the adapter is plugged in.

Once the drivers are installed and the serial to USB adapter is plugged in, if you are watching the Device Manager, you will see new (virtual) COM port appear in the Ports (COM & LPT) category.

If, when you go to the Device Manager, you see any devices with yellow question marks on them, those are usually from earlier failed attempts to plug and play a new piece of hardware.

If any of the yellow question marks are from earlier failed attempts to plug and play your serial to USB inverter that will stay there forever unless you remove it. And nothing will happen (no New Hardware wizard) will run when you plug the adapter in.

If you want to try again to install an adapter, you should first remove (uninstall) the yellow question mark device caused by your serial to USB adapter.

<snip>

So, finally, I am left with the original question, where should I go from here? I would sincerely appreciate anyone's thoughts. (Including, I guess, even the obvious one.)

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Another way to get USB devices attached to a laptop without hardware serial ports is to use a PCMCIA (aka PC Card or Card Bus) serial port card. The PCMCIA slots are soon to be a vanishing species too, they'll be replaced by the ExpressCard:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PCMCIA>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ExpressCard>

I have Socket and Qlynx brand PCMCIA serial port adapters and they both have worked fine on every PC (desktop or laptop) I have tried them on. Again, there is a process for setting up the drivers for them. Those cards have a short cable(s) attached with DB-9F connectors. Instant gratification for anyone used to looking for hardware serial port connectors.

http://www.synchrotech.com/products/serial-io-pcmcia-card_01.html

I got my cards on eBay for much less than the MSRP.

Good luck with all this, I'm sure what you want to do can be done.

Jack

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