Featured Printer Technical Article
Negotiating the False Initialization Error

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Service manuals for HP laser printers give excellent trouble-shooting advice for most error messages, but there are omissions. This is especially problematic when the situation in question does not reflect reality. Such is the case with the false "Card Slot Not Initialized," an error we will show you how to clear.

"Card Slot Not Initialized," is a reference to a formatter board plug-in accessory, of which there are two general kinds: (1) SIMMs and DIMMs — small circuit boards containing firmware, memory, or fonts, or (2) MIO or EIO cards — larger cards usually used to add ports (network, serial, etc.) to a printer, but which can also include things like hard disk drives.

The hard drive is the only one of these accessories that normally requires initialization. However, none of the clients who called LPT Technical Support with this problem had hard disks in their printers. Instead, we asked them to remove memory DIMMs, EIO cards, etc., and perform cold resets to try to clear the message. Nothing seemed to work. Finally, in the spirit of "Even though it makes no sense, it can't hurt to try," we had them try the hard disk initialization procedure. With the exception of one case (a LaserJet 5000 printer – this model does not appear to have a hard disk initialization procedure), this solved the problem! Further confirmation was provided when the same message popped up on one of our test beds, and we were able to clear it by executing the procedure.

It is still not clear what causes this message to appear. One possibility is that the printer originally had a hard disk installed, and gets confused after the disk is removed. Whatever the cause, it is clear that the initialization procedure will clear a "Card Slot Not Initialized" message when there is no hard drive to be formatted.

However, many of the HP service manuals do not list the procedure for initializing the hard disk. In general, printers with similar control panels use comparable procedures, thus we were able to deduce many procedures from the ones that are listed in the manuals. We have no procedure for the old-style printers with single-digit model numbers, however, those do not utilize EIO hard drives anyway. Most of the printers that have four-digit model numbers, EIO slots, and a display panel (other than just lights) are listed in the table below, along with a key to the appropriate procedure.

To summarize: when you see the message "Card Slot Not Initialized" on your printer's display, perform the hard disk initialization procedure even if there is no hard disk installed. It is also worth noting that even though the first canon of trouble-shooting is to 'keep it simple,' there are times to try things even though they do not appear to make sense.

—Dennis Kosterman

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PRINTERS AND INITIALIZATION PROCEDURES

Model		Model		Model	
2300	4	4300	4	9000	4
24xx	6	4345 MFP	3	CLJ 4500	???
4000	???	4350	6	CLJ 4550	1
4050	1	5000	???	CLJ 4600	5
4100	1	5100	1	CLJ 4650	6
4100/01 mfp	2	8000	1	CLJ 5500	5
4200	4	8100	1	CLJ 5550	6
4250	6	8150	1	CLJ 9500	5

1 – Press and hold **Cancel Job** and **Select** while powering on. When all three lights are lit and unblinking, release these buttons and then press and release the left (minus) side of **Menu**, then press and release the left (minus) side of **Value**, then press and release **Select**.

2 – Press and hold **Start** while powering on. Release it when all three lights are lit and unblinking. Then press and release the left navigation button. The message "INITIALIZE DISKS" should appear on the display. Now press and release **Select** (✓), and the rest of the process is automatic.

3 – Turn the printer on and watch the display. When the memory count begins, press and hold the right-hand side of the **Start**. When all three lights are lit and unblinking, release this button. Then press and release **5**. The message "INITIALIZE DISK" should appear on the display. Now press and release **6**.

4 – Press and hold **Pause/Resume** while powering on. When all lights are lit and unblinking, release this button, and then press and release ↺. The message "INITIALIZE DISK" should appear on the display. Now press and release **Select** (✓).

5 – Turn the printer on and watch the display. When the memory count begins, press and hold **Pause/Resume**. When all lights are lit and unblinking, release this button, and then press and release ↺. The message "INITIALIZE DISK" should appear on the display. Now press and release **Select** (✓).

6 – Turn the printer on and watch the display. When the memory count begins, press and hold **Menu**. When all lights are lit and unblinking, release this button, and then press and release ↺. The message "INITIALIZE DISK" should appear on the display. Now press and release **Select** (✓).

??? – The service manuals for these printers do not contain a hard disk initialization procedure, and we were unable to find a procedure that worked. It may be possible to initialize the hard disk using Web JetAdmin (available by free download from HP's web site), but we do not know whether this would work without a hard disk installed.