TECH ARTICLE

Why Doesn't the Printer Pull Paper from the Cassettes?

Nearly every day we at LPT Tech Support get a call about a printer that will not pull paper from the desired tray. For example, with the MP Tray (Tray 1) empty and the cassette filled with paper, the display will request a specific paper size and type be loaded into the MP Tray.

We devised the following trouble-shooting steps to help you deal with this common problem quickly.
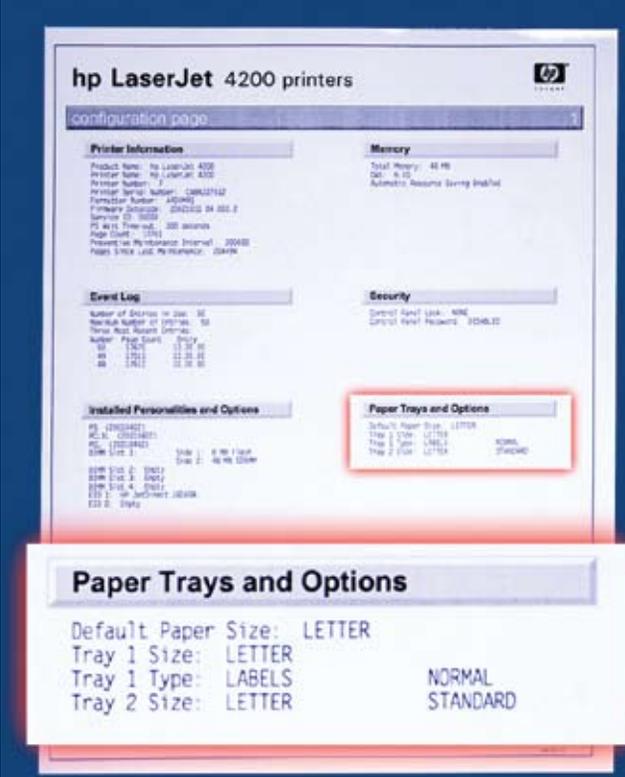
Remember: Before pulling paper from a tray, the printer must detect both the right paper size (letter, legal etc) *and* type (plain, letterhead etc.).

1. Does the detected PAPER SIZE match the tray contents?

The first step is to determine if the tray contents match what is detected. Then we will know if it is a mechanical or a settings issue.

a. Print a configuration page (from Tray 1 if necessary) and note where, under "Paper Trays and Options," it lists each tray, along with the paper size that it detects for that tray. If the listed size does not match what is actually in the tray, something is wrong with the paper-size sensing mechanism (go to Step 6). If they match, it is a settings issue (Step 2).

NOTE: *You can also discover what the*

If the Paper Tray and Options indications do not match what is in the printer, something is wrong with the paper-size sensing mechanism.

printer has detected in the tray by pressing Go (or Continue) when the printer flashes the Load Paper message. The display message will read "OK TO USE [Type] [Size] INSTEAD? If the size indicated in the message matches what is in the cassette, the problem is with settings rather than the paper size sensing mechanism.

2. Does the detected PAPER TYPE match the tray contents?

A paper type mismatch is almost always a settings issue, because most printers do not detect paper type. It is defined in the printer menus.

Print a menu map from the information menu on the printer, which will indicate the defined paper type for each tray. If the type does not match what is in the tray, you have

found the conflict. If they do not match, go to Step 3.

3. Do the Computer Print Menu Settings for PAPER SIZE AND TYPE match the tray contents?

Check the print menu on the computer to see if the paper size and type match what is in the cassette. If there is a mismatch, you have found the problem. If not, go to Step 4

4. Is Tray 1 being requested?

a. Make sure Tray 1/MP Tray is not being requested in the computer print menu.

b. Check the Paper Handling Menu to see if MANUAL FEED is selected. If it is, choose another option and the problem should be fixed. Otherwise go to the next step.

5. Is the cassette locked out?

Some printers before the LaserJet 4000 permitted users to automatically bypass trays by locking them out. Search the paper handling menu for such an option and deselect it.

If you or your customer feels certain that the printer itself is malfunctioning, run a paper path test from the suspect tray. If it pulls from your tray, and if the configuration page matches what is actually in the cassette, the cassette and the paper-size sensing board should both be fine. Recheck the settings.

6. Mechanical Issues

A mechanical failure has caused a paper-size sensing error.

1. Replace the cassette with a known-working cassette. If the problem persists, the paper-size sensing board inside the printer has worn out and needs to be replaced. If it pulls from the swapped tray, inspect the original tray's paper size mechanism for damage or incorrect setting. Problem solved!

Mad About Printers — by RR