How to add or remove a printer from your Mac

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Despite the high prevalence of work done online, some things still need to be printed out. There's a lot of talk about companies going paperless, but it would be difficult to find a major enterprise that doesn't need at least a few things printed here and there.

The same thing is happening at home, as remote workers may need to sign a contract, or school-age children may need to print a report. And, sometimes, connecting to the right printer can be a little confusing.

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If you're using Mac computer, the process is fairly straightforward, whether you're connecting at home or in the office. Here's how you can add or remove a printer from your Mac.

Note: For this article, I am using a 2016 MacBook Pro with Touch Bar, running macOS Sierra, but these steps should work for a few prior operating systems as well.

To get started, go to your Dock and click the "System Preferences" icon. For those unfamiliar, it's the silver icon that has a gear on it. From the System Preferences window, look at the second row of icons from the top, and click the "Printers & Scanners" icon. It's the one that looks like a printer.

In the Printers & Scanners pane, you may see a padlock icon in the bottom left hand corner, next to some text that says "Click the lock to make changes." This one is pretty self-explanatory, as you'll have to click the lock, and then enter your user credentials to unlock the ability to add or remove a printer. If that icon is present, click it and follow the prompts for your username and password. If successful, the icon should now appear unlocked in the window.

The middle of the pane should show, in bold, the current printer you're connected to, while the white space to the left that says "Printers" will list all of the printers you have previously connected to.

To add a printer to this list, click the "Plus" (+) sign under the white space. From there, a window titled "Add" should pop up, giving you multiple options to add a printer.

The default option, noted as "Default" in the tabs at the top, will show you the printers that your Mac can find on the network. To add a printer that is available on your network, simply click on the name of the printer in the list. For most options, the "Name:" and "Use:" will auto populate. You can change the name or location to whatever you want, but "Use" indicates what driver will be needed by the computer to use the printer. If the "Use" driver doesn't populate, the printer may not be compatible with your Mac. Once you have the fields filled out, click "Add" and you should be good to go.

Adding a printer with an IP address will be most common in an office setting. To start, click on the "IP" tab after you click the Plus (+) sign. From there, you will need to type in the Address and Queue (if you're using one other than default), and select the protocol from the drop-down list. All of these pieces of information should be printed on the printer itself, or made available to you by an IT employee at your organization. You'll also need to add the name and the location, and select the driver to be used in the drop-down list. Once you have completed these steps, click "Add."

To add a printer that is shared by a Windows machine on your network, click the Plus (+) sign and then click the "Windows" tab. If there are any available printers, a network browser will open with them listed. Click on the Windows workgroup, and then on the print server, adding your credentials if they are asked for. Then, close the popup window, enter the name and location in the fields, and select a driver from the "Use" drop-down menu. Once these steps have been followed, click the "Add" button.

Another option is to use a USB-connected printer. If this is the way you want to go, the majority of the time you simply just need to plug the printer into your USB or USB-C port and your Mac should recognize the printer. If the driver isn't readily available, a window may pop up prompting you to install new software to make it work, which you should do. After the computer finishes installing the proper driver, you should be good to go.

To remove a printer, go to the "Printers & Scanners" pane from your "System Preferences" window. Make sure you click the lock icon and enter your credentials, then under "Printers" on the left side, click on the printer you wish to remove. When the printer is selected, it should be highlighted in blue and, to remove it, click the Minus (-) symbol. You will be asked if you are sure you wish to remove the printer, then click "Delete Printer." That will remove the printer.

Once you have successfully added or removed a printer, be sure to click the lock again to save your changes and lock the settings back into place.

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