

Re: Disappearing Driver

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From: cquirke (MVP Win9x) (cquirkenews_at_nospam.mvps.org)

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On Tue, 6 Apr 2004 13:09:16 -0700, "Chris"

*>I recently installed an external CD writer using Nero
>software. For a while the PC would let me operate the
>internal CD-Rom and the CD-Writer.*

I see further on this is Win98xx, tho you are posting to an XP newsgroup. Also, you don't mention PC hardware – is this a "real" PC or a laptop? If laptop, is the CD internal or on a USB cable?

>Now only the CD Writer is operational.

Define "not operational". Do you mean:

- does not appear in Windows Explorer
- appears in Windows Explorer but does not read CDs

...? Does it appear in Device Manager, and if so, is it bonged ("!")?

*>I've searched the Internet and asked around but nobody
>seems to have a clue how to fix the problem. One guy
>advised me to load a CD-Rom driver from a floppy. Yeah,
>right! The MSCDEX.exe file is not corrupt.*

MSCDEX should NOT be loaded under Windows! That is quite likely to be the problem. I suggest you start by renaming away C:\CONFIG.SYS and C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT (say, to *.TXT) and restarting Windows.

*>boot-up Win 98 grabs the D drive for its 'ramdrive'
>shoving the CDRom into a temporary E slot. Nice one.*

False; that's the standard Win98 Emergency Boot Diskette.

>I reassigned the drive letters as advised. Still no joy.

How are you re-assigning drive letters? Via MSCDEX or Device Manager? The two systems can clash, causing the same drive to appear on multiple letters or a drive to be masked. Use MSCEX *ONLY* in DOS mode, and use only Device Manager management in Windows.

>I must admit that it is a comfort to know that even geeks
>don't have all the answers.

CD drive problems like this are quite simple, usually.
Maybe you need better geeks? :-)

>The following resolutions seem possible either
>independently or in conjunction with each other.

>1 I can obtain a splitter cable as one can get for a hard
>disk and operate both the internal and external hardware
>from it using an automatic or manual switching device.

Er... no.

>2 I can reinstall Win98 in a separate folder having first
>saved my own personal files to CD. This might possibly
>restore function to the internal CD Rom. I can then make
>sure that I provide a separate drive letter for the
>external drive – if I want to risk reinstalling it.

Er... rather not

>3 I can replace the existing internal CD Rom with one
>whose spec and driver comes with its own installation disk
>If the issue is not resolved that way then I know that it
>is almost certainly an OE issue.

OE? Modern CD-ROM do NOT need special "drivers" in Win9x, they just
work. If they don't just work, it's either because something botches
them, or they are defective, or they aren't cabled correctly.

>For the geeks among you here are some spec details.

>Microsoft Windows 98 4.10.2222 A

>CD /T:C:\WININST0.400 /SrcDir=E:\WIN98 /IZ /IS /IQ /IT /II
>/NR /II /C /U:xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I dunno what all that is...

>IE 5 6.0.2800.1106

Is that IE 5 or IE 6?

>GenuineIntel Pentium(r) II Processor
>128MB RAM

OK, so it's young enough to have built-in PCI xIDE controllers

Right; let's get started.

Re: Disappearing Driver

Zeroth thing: Unplug from mains when doing all open case work.

Your PC proly has an ATX PSU and those dribble power into the system even when "switched off". It won't hurt you, but could kill the PC.

First thing: Check the drive is correctly jumpered and cabled

There are three cables that apply; the power connector (without which the tray won't open), the IDE data cable, and the audio feed to the sound card (without which it works, but audio CDs won't be audible).

The IDE cable is usually where things go wrong, and ties in with the jumper setting (you may need to pull the CD drive out to see these). The red line on the edge of the data cable must be closest to the power connector and corresponds to "Pin 1". This must be correct at the CD, HD and where the cable goes to motherboard/controller.

If the same data cable goes to both HD and CD, then the CD must be jumpered as Slave, unless the HD is jumpered Cable Select. If HD is jumpered Cable Select, then the CD must also be Cable Select. If the CD is alone on its own data cable then Master is best setting to use.

Second thing: Check the IDE channel is enabled in CMOS

This applies only if the CD is alone on its own data cable, i.e. on the Secondary IDE channel. If that channel is disabled in CMOS, or clashes with an add-in, the drive will vanish from Windows Explorer.

Third thing: Does the drive work?

Test in DOS mode, using either the drive's own .SYS driver or the OakCDROM.SYS that comes with Win98, together with MSCDEX.EXE
Note: This is the ONLY time you want any of these drivers in effect; when in DOS mode. Not Windows, not for DOS window sessions running within Windows either. If the drive fails here as well as in Windows, test it in another PC and half-expect it to be a duff drive.

Forth thing: Are you in DOS compatibility mode?

Start, Settings, Control Panel, System, Performance tab. If that states you are in DOS compatibility mode, then the CD will NOT be natively seen in Windows at all – it will work only if DOS .SYS driver is present, and badly at that. You must resolve DOS compatibility mode before doing anything else, as some causes are not innocuous.

See <http://users.iafrica.com/c/cq/cquirke/doscompat.htm>

Fifth thing: Have you tried suppressing Config.sys and Autoexec.bat?

Windows is supposed to automatically suppress CD .SYS driver and MSCDEX in these files, but doesn't always. When this DOS stuff is

stinking up Windows, you may see DOS compatibility mode (s-l-o-w) or problems with drive letter assignments.

Sixth thing: Do you have drive letter conflicts?

MSCDEX can be a problem here, as can LAN drive letter mappings and other things that occupy drive letters. Suspect this if the drive works in DOS mode, appears fine in Device Manager, but doesn't appear in Windows Explorer as a drive letter.

Good luck, feed back yer mileage :-)

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> Running Windows-based av to kill active malware is like striking
> a match to see if what you are standing in is water or petrol.
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