

Microsoft is improving printing on Windows 11

The Windows printing experience hasn't changed much in decades. To operate the printer, it often requires a corresponding third-party driver.

And depending on the type of printer you have, they could be drivers that are very outdated and full of problems, such as causing security vulnerabilities or performance problems.

Fortunately, an update is being planned by Microsoft for the upcoming Windows 11 that will significantly change the user's printing experience in a more positive direction. This update is currently being tested for users in the Windows Insiders program, before rolling out to global users.

Accordingly, the latest Windows 11 insider preview build of Windows 11 is adding a new mode called "protected print". This mode will allow users to use the modern Windows print stack with a "plug and play" experience. Microsoft says the new feature not only brings more convenience and speed to users when executing print jobs, but is also significantly safer than self-developed OEM drivers.

This would likely mean the death of third-party drivers — leaving only a single stack that is updated by Microsoft and compatible with multiple printers. Additionally, not using third-party drivers will also help address long-standing vulnerabilities, such as those that lead to exploits like Print Nightmare, while also ensuring that malicious kernels are less likely to have a greater chance of penetrating the system.

Currently, if you want to experience this feature, you will have to be a Windows Insiders user and enable it manually. Microsoft has detailed the steps as follows:

1. Click **Start**
2. Open **Local Group Policy Editor** .
3. Navigate to **Computer Configuration > Administrative Templates > Printers** .
4. Right-click ' **Configure Windows protected print** ' and click ' **Edit** '.
5. Select the ' **Enabled** ' button.
6. Click ' **Apply** ' and then ' **OK** ' .
7. Windows' protected print feature is now enabled.

Note that this new feature will currently only work with Mopria-certified printers. There are thousands of Mopria printers from many manufacturers such as HP, Samsung, Canon and Xerox, so if you have a relatively new printer, chances are it's Mopria certified. However, this also means that some older models will not be compatible and continue to require third-party drivers.

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