

Type 3 and Type 4 Printer Drivers

The admin might want to take note of the difference between Type 3 and Type 4 drivers. The latter can facilitate print service management because standard end-users can install them without administrative rights. Otherwise, adjustments can be made using Group Policy.

With Windows 8, we have redesigned the printer driver model; it has remained relatively unchanged since the introduction of Version 3 or V3 drivers in Windows 2000. The v3 model relies heavily on OEMs to produce customized drivers for each specific device to make sure that specific features of each print device can be accessed by Windows applications. Managing a printing infrastructure using the v3 driver model requires the administrator to manage a large number of drivers, and to manage drivers on client machines as well as servers, resulting in the requirement to manage both 32-bit and 64-bit print drivers to support both of these client architectures.

V4 Model Overview

The version 4 print driver model provides a simple but flexible management experience. Some of the benefits of version 4 drivers are:

- Printer sharing does not require the installation of drivers that match the client architecture
- Driver files are isolated from each other, preventing driver filename conflicts
- A single driver can support a single device or multiple devices
- Drivers are typically smaller than version3 drivers, and installation times are typically faster than comparable version 3 drivers

Using the version 4 driver model, OEMs can provide **Print Class Drivers** that support features that are common to a broad set of devices that use the same printer description language, such as PCL, PS, or XPS. Print Class Drivers also provide the following benefits:

1. Driver packages are smaller and printer driver files are less likely to cause stability problems
2. The administrator has to manage fewer drivers

Version 4 print drivers can be distributed via Windows Update or Windows Software Update Services (WSUS), but are not distributed to print clients from the print server.