

How to check / reassign USB COM ports: Windows XP/ 2000

Overview

Even after the USB driver has apparently been installed correctly, you may find that your computer still cannot establish communications with your USB-enabled UFI device. The first step toward fixing this problem should be to determine whether your computer shows that the driver is, in fact, installed. If so, you then need to check whether your computer has assigned a *usable* COM port to the UFI device.

Newer computers usually have many more potential COM ports than are allowed for in UFI software. Currently, our USB-enabled software **must use a COM port numbered COM1 through COM8**. Nonetheless, during driver installation your computer may automatically assign your UFI device to COM9 or higher. If this occurs, USB communications between your computer and the UFI device will fail.

There is a simple, two-step solution: 1) *check the USB port* assignment; 2) *reassign* the UFI device to COM8 or lower *if necessary*. The following instructions are for Windows XP:

Verify USB driver installation under Windows XP (Windows 2000 is similar)

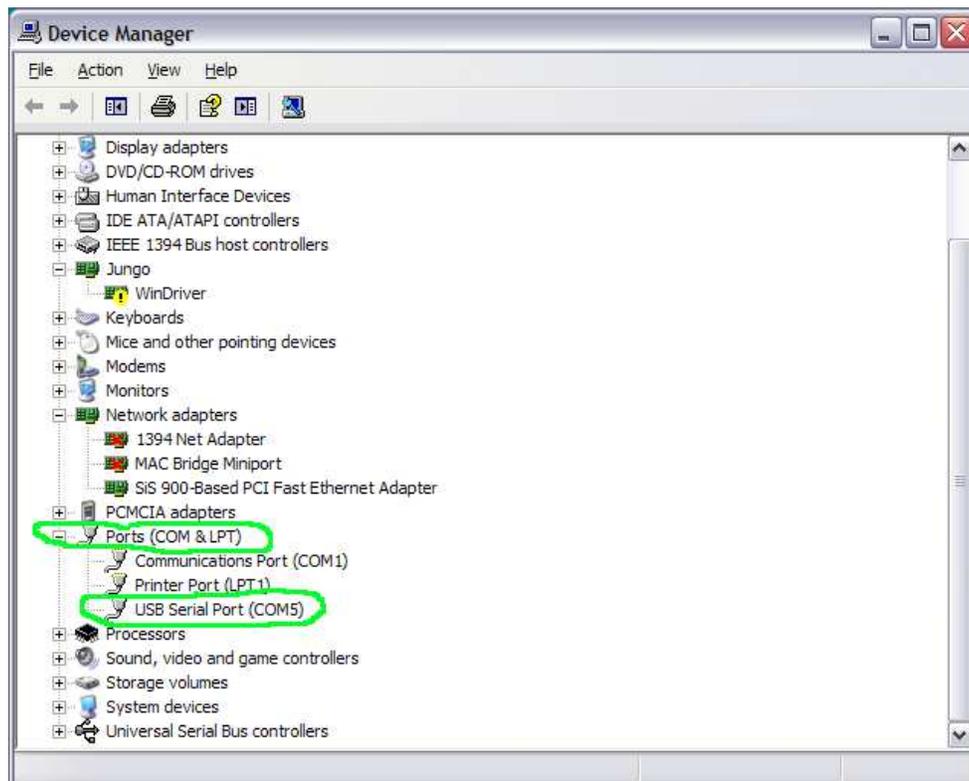
- 1) Install the USB driver onto your computer as described on the [Troubleshooting page](#).
- 2) Connect your USB-enabled UFI device to your computer with the USB cable, but do not turn device on yet.
- 3) Open the Windows **Start Menu**, right-click on **My Computer**, then left-click on **Properties**. The **System Properties** menu opens in a new box:



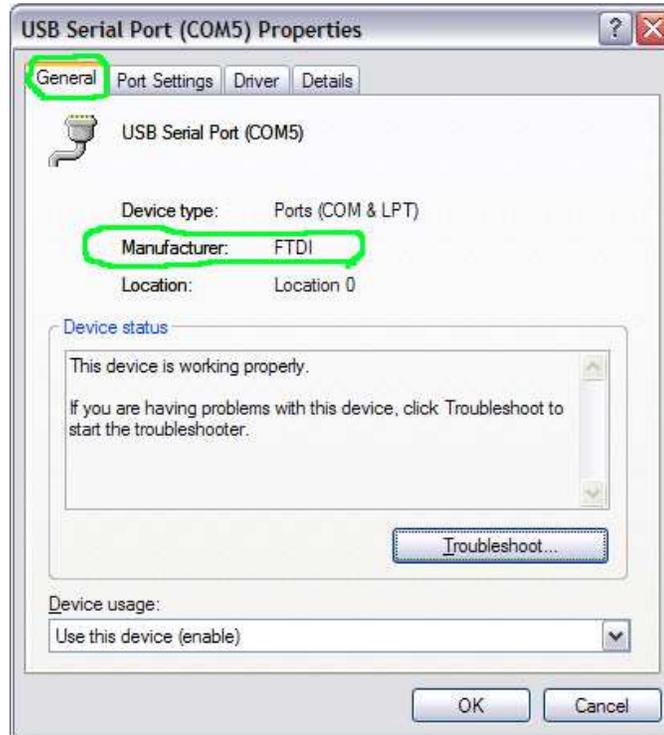
- 4) Click on the **Hardware** tab, then click again on the **Device Manager** button:



- 5) Find the **Ports (COM & LPT)** heading, then click on the + sign to expand the "tree." You should see at least one item called **USB Serial Port (COMx)**, where x is a one-, two- or three-digit number -- here it's "5" -- denoting an installed port:

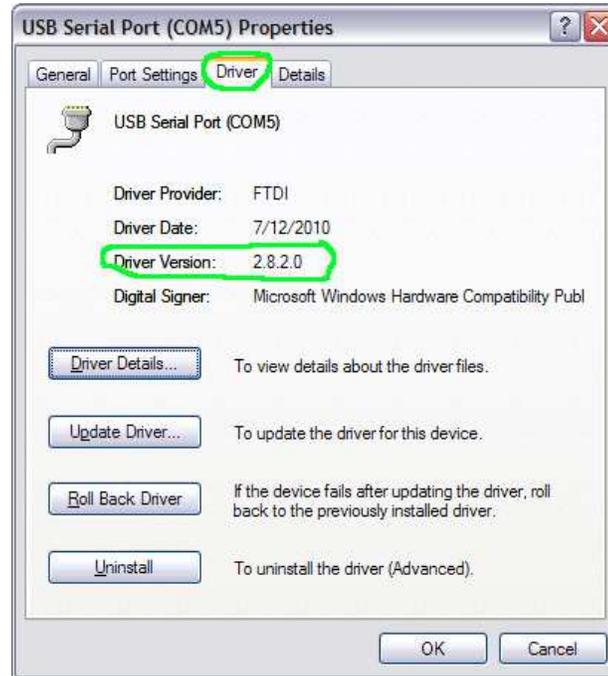


- 6) Right-click on the **USB Serial Port (COMx)** item and then left-click on **Properties** on the drop-down menu. This opens a new tabbed box called **USB Serial Port (COMx) Properties**:



- 7) Select the **General** tab if it is not already on top. If the USB driver for your UFI device is installed, then opposite the **Manufacturer:** heading you should see “FTDI.” (FTDI -- Future Technology Devices International Ltd - - manufactures the USB chip and associated driver that UFI presently uses in all its USB-enabled products.)
- 8) If you do *not* see “FTDI” on the **General** tab for this USB COM port, then back up to Step 5 above. Are there other installed USB COM ports, labeled **USB Serial Port (COMy)** (and maybe even **USB Serial Port (COMz)**, etc.) ?
- If so*, follow Steps 6 and 7 for each of these ports to check whether the FTDI driver has been installed to one of them, **then proceed to Step 9 for that port.**
 - If not*, then go back to the [Troubleshooting page](#) and attempt to install the USB-enabled UFI device driver again.
 - If this doesn't work, make sure you have all the latest service packs and Windows Updates for your version of Windows XP.
 - If, having done this “due diligence,” you still cannot install the USB driver, [contact UFI.](#)

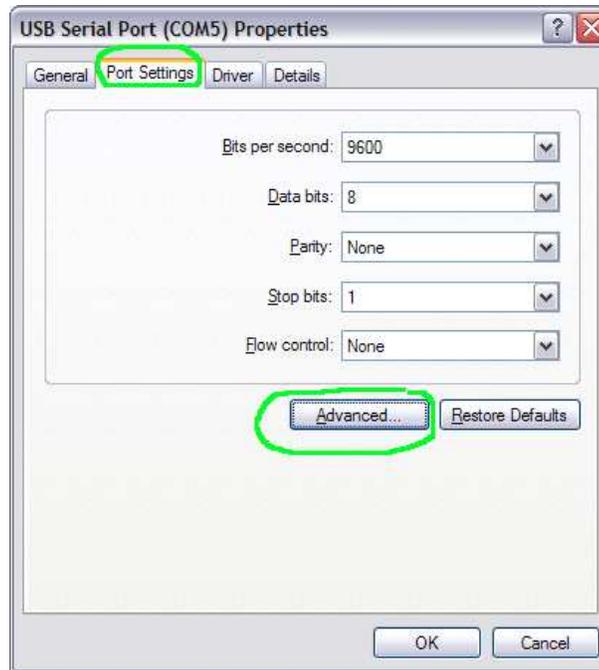
- 9) To check the FTDI driver version – which may be useful information if you have to contact UFI support -- click on the **Driver** tab on the **USB Serial Port (COMx) Properties** box. You'll see headings similar to those shown in the screenshot below:



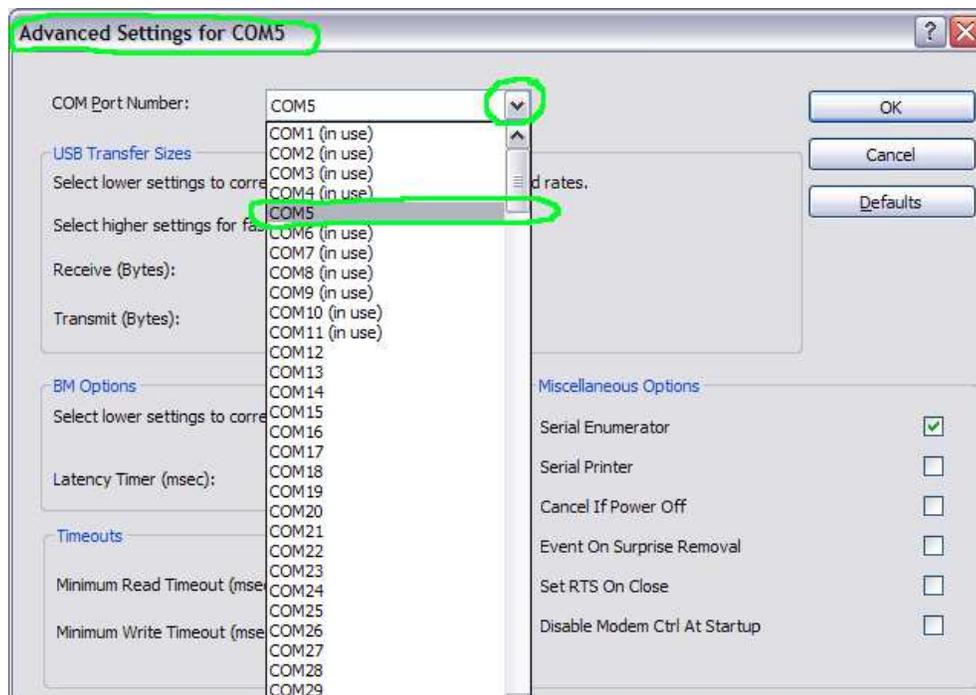
- 10) As mentioned above, "COMx" must be in the range from COM1 through COM8 in order for your UFI product to communicate with your computer.
- If it is within range, your device should work – follow the instructions for your UFI product. These usually ask you to power up the device, start the associated UFI software and then establish a link to your computer when required.
 - However, ***if you find that the FTDI driver was assigned to COM9 or above, go on to Step 11 to reassign the driver to a lower-numbered COM port.***

Reassign driver to a new COM port (*only if necessary*) in Windows XP

- 11) If the **USB Serial Port (COMx) Properties** box isn't already open, follow the instructions in Step 6 above to (re)open it. Then select the **Port Settings** tab and click on the **Advanced** button:



- 12) A new box called **Advanced Settings for COMx** opens. Click on the down arrow next to the **COM Port Number** heading to open a drop-down box that shows all possible COM ports for your computer:



- 13) Examine the list of COM1 through COM8. Try to find a port that is *not* labeled “(in use)” so that you can assign the FTDI driver for your UFI device to that unused port.
 - a. If you *are* able to find an unused port within the COM1-8 range, click on it, then go to Step 15. *In the example screen capture for Step 12, you would choose COM 5.*
 - b. If, however, all ports *are* labeled “(in use),” will need to check whether an active device actually is attached to each of them. (Unfortunately, we are aware of no easy way to do this in Windows XP.) Generally you’ll be able to find, by trial and error if necessary, at least one port that can be “requisitioned.”
- 14) Click the OK buttons on the last two open boxes to close them, starting with **Advanced Settings for COMx**, then **USB Serial Port (COMx) Properties**. Then close **Device Manager** – no OK is needed -- and finally click OK to close the **System Properties** box.
- 15) Restart your computer to activate the new COM port setting. Then go on to start your UFI device as described in Step 10a above. If you like, you can first check whether the COM port number for the FTDI driver was actually updated – just perform Steps 3 through 6 again.