

Secure printing--no more mad dashes to the copy room

[Print](#)



Crabby Office Lady

We spend a fair amount of time making sure that our computers, documents, and private information are all kept secure. But all that time and energy can be for naught if you share a network printer.

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You know it, you need it, you use it every day: the copy room. It's the place for ad-hoc meetings, copy machine tantrums (its and yours), and petty pen and legal pad theft. It's also a hot spot for confidential information, lying in a pile at the printer, patiently waiting for you (and everyone else) to pick it up.

The reason for my writing this column is simple: I don't ever again want to see you, red-faced and panting, galloping frantically past the cubicles toward the copy room to retrieve that confidential document, only to find that someone already gathered it up with their own stuff. And how can we avoid this unsightly spectacle? By reading on to learn how to print securely when using a network printer, that's how.

What is a network printer?

If you're sitting (or standing) at your desk and you can see the umbilical cord connecting a printer to your computer, you're not using a network printer. Your printer is there to do your bidding and no one else's. However (and this is a big however), if you and your coworkers share a printer, one that's available by anyone in your organization who knows how to connect to it, you're in a shared printer environment. And as warm and special as that sounds, that makes your documents, spreadsheets, and anything else you're sending to the copy room, vulnerable to (even unintentionally) prying eyes.

Depending on the type of printer you're connected to and how your network is set up, there is usually a way, from within your Office program, to delay printing until you're good and ready (meaning: when you're in the copy room ready to retrieve your documents). Welcome back to warm and special.

Save it for your eyes

In Word, Excel, or any other printable Office document, a section in the Print dialog box lets you tell the printer to hold off printing your document until you're in the copy room. However, where to set this up depends on the type of printer you're using. The two shared printers I make use of are Xerox and HP brands, and here is how to set up secure printing for either of these:

Secure print to a Xerox printer

1. On the **File** menu, click **Print**.
2. Click **Properties**, and then click **Advanced**.
3. Under **Job type**, select **Secure Print**.
4. It will ask you to type in a four digit code twice.
After you go to the printer, you select the job and then type in the same four digit code.

NOTE The procedure documented above is a general one; the actual procedure may differ for your specific type of Xerox printer.

Secure print to an HP printer

1. On the **File** menu, click **Print**.
2. Click **Properties**, and then click the **Destination** tab.

3. Under **Destination features**, select **Job Retention** and then click **Options**.
4. In the next dialog box, under **Job Retention Mode**, select **Private Job**.
5. Enter your name, assign a name to the job you're about to print, and then type a four digit code. Once you go to the printer, you select the job and then type in the same four digit code.

NOTE The procedure documented above is a general one; the actual procedure may differ for your specific type of HP printer.

As you can see, the printers that do offer secure printing options have slightly different ways of accessing that feature. I suggest that you poke around the print dialog box and see what options you have. Or, a better way might be to read the printer's documentation either online or the booklet that came in the box. (Don't yell at me because you didn't save it...)

Also, take a look at this article about which printers offer the best security: [Cream of the Crop: Secure Printers](#).

So please, save yourself, your documents, and your irregular running gait any embarrassing moments. Just take a few minutes to figure out how to print securely, and spend your exercise time at the gym. Better yet, go outside and get some fresh air with your family.

Happy Thanksgiving, everybody.

"Security is mostly a superstition; it does not exist in nature. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing." — Helen Keller

About the author

[Annik Stahl](#), the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the [Did this article help you?](#) feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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