Frequently Asked Questions

Title: Information Required for Technical Support
Date: 28 Sep 2017; revised March 2020
Card/Board/Module: All
Operating System: Windows

Question:

I am having some application problems.
What information does technical support need in order to best help me ?

Answer:

Here is a checklist of questions for a customer reporting a problem. Answering these questions will provide technical support with as much information as possible up front, and enable us to provide a quick and correct solution. The more information available from you makes it easier to try to reproduce the problem, or to understand what is causing the problem.

1. Give **exact card name** as found on the white strip on the back of the card. Also **exact names of modules** on card, if applicable. In addition, provide the board and module **serial numbers**.

2. Verify the **DIP switch** and **jumper settings**, if any.

3. What **operating system** is running on the machine? **32bit** or **64bit** ?

4. What software is installed (full name)? What version? (Please see the file RevisionHistory.txt or readme.rev, in the installation folder, or right click on the DLL name in Windows Explorer and select the Properties/Version or Properties/Details tab to see the revision number.)

5. Verify that the customer did all of the steps to properly install the card under the given operating system, as explained in file "**Installation Instructions.pdf**" (formerly named readme.pdf):
- **Hardware installation**:
  - Verify that the card appears in the **Device Manager**, or perhaps an unknown **PCI Device**, and install or update the driver. The latest released hardware drivers are available for download from www.mil-1553.com/kernel-drivers .
- **Software installation**:
  - Run **ExcConfig** to assign a device number to the card
  - Run one of the **demo programs** to verify that the card is working. If the demo program does not run successfully, mark down the name of the demo program that was run, the function call that failed, and what error message was returned (error code number or error string [esomething]).

6. If the card is not working, then run **ExcConfig** (Start | Programs | Excalibur | ExcConfig) and check the **Debug** checkbox, click on Save, close, and reboot the system. Then run one of the demo programs, and search for the file excalbr.log. It may be in the Windows folder or the Windows System subfolder. Email us this log file. For Windows 2000/XP and newer, also email us the file frontdesk.log or ExcFrontDesk.log.

7. Make **screen captures** of all installed Excalibur devices: Open the **Device Manager** (Select Start | Settings |

Control Panel | System | Hardware | Device Manager). Click on the plus sign (+) to show all the Excalibur devices installed.

- Press Alt+PrintScreen to capture the screen. Paste the screen capture into Microsoft Word or save as a graphic in any graphics program. Double-click each Excalibur device to display its properties, and take screen captures of each one.

- Now click on the Details tab. In the drop down box, select "Device Instance Id" or "Hardware Ids". Press Alt+PrintScreen to capture the screen. Paste the screen capture into Microsoft Word or save as a graphic in any graphics program.

- These screen captures enable Technical Support to determine whether the hardware is set up properly.

Excalibur cards are listed under a heading similar to **Excalibur PCI Cards** or **Excalibur PCMCIA Cards**.

Note that each Excalibur device should have a gray colored diamond shape next to it (Win XP and earlier). For Win7/8/10, there is a display icon with perhaps a small question mark (?) next to the installed Excalibur card. This is an acceptable phenomenon.

If any Excalibur device has a large yellow question mark (?) or exclamation mark (!), then the driver did not install properly.

If there is a "**PCI Device**" marked with a yellow question mark (?) or exclamation mark (!), then you probably need to reinstall the driver for the card.

8. What is the **revision number of the hardware drivers** ? From the Device Manager, for the Excalibur listed devices, click on one of the cards listed, and click on the Driver tab. Then click on the button "Driver Details". For each file listed in this window, send us the version number of file as listed in the lower section of the screen.

The hardware driver files are found at C:\Windows\System32 and C:\Windows\System32\drivers. The file names are:
- For 64bit Windows: excx64.sys and frontdesk.dll
- For 32bit Windows: exc2000.sys and frontdesk.dll
- For Windows NT: excalbr.sys
- For Windows 9x/ME: excalbr.vxd

Press Alt-ENTER (or right click, Properties | Version) to display the properties screen, select the Version or Details tab to extract the version information, and add this to the email you send us.

9. Run the **Showhex** Memory Display utility. Select "Start | Programs | Excalibur | Showhex Memory Display Utility". [The current revision of Showhex is available for download from www.mil-1553.com/applications .]

Select the device number as assigned in ExcConfig, and a module number. Then, select (a) "File | Save All Modules to File" or (b) "File | Save to File". If (b), then do this for each module on the card (for 4000PCI card, also do this for module 4, global register bank). Email us these files.

The Showhex files are good for the case where the card does not work, and also for the case where the card works but has problems. It gives us a picture of the memory on the card and the messages as they were set up by the user.

Note that the memory on all of our card/modules is NVRAM. This means that when you turn the machine off, all the data that was in memory is erased. When the machine is turned on, the card/module performs a reset, also wiping the memory clean. A Showhex dump run immediately after power on is also helpful, to show if the card is alive at that point.

10. For **Exalt** problems, note the Exalt version number; send the .pak (package) file, the .rpf (replay) file, and the .scn (scenario) files (if there are any in use).

11. Please send a **sketch** of the system – computers, cabling/wiring, couplers, Excalibur cards, etc.

If your system is 1553 protocol communications, please see our "1553 Bus Connections diagram.pdf" document on our Help Desk webpage at URL www.mil-1553.com/help-desk.