

Programmer FAQ

by Gunter Baab

Q: I have several programmers with different coloured caps. What does that mean?

A: beginning with generation 3 there are pure programmers and programmers with additional dongle function that have different colours:

- grey: generation 1 and 2 all had grey caps. A dongle did not exist
- blue: no dongle functions. All UPP1, UPP2 und ISP3 without "Debug" in the name
- green: Dongle for AVRco Compiler Standard-Version
- red: Dongle for AVRco Compiler Profi-Version

Q: how can I identify my programmer's generation?

A: it is easy when you look at the position of the reset switch.
generation 1 and 2 had internal solder pads that are shorted to force a reset
generation 3 had a drill hole on the back and an internal reset push button
generation 4 had a drill hole next to the USB connector + internal reset push button
generation 5 has a visible reset button next to the USB connector

Q: where do I find the production date?

A: handwritten on a sticker on the back (ddmmyy nn, nn=sequence number)
This is the date of the final firmware update and function check

Q: what is the meaning of the serial number?

Q: what info does E-LAB need to identify me and my device?

A: the serial number is unique and is printed on the back of the device and also on the invoice.

It's main goals are to identify the device when you use several programmers at the same time, for encryption (with the serial number of the target programmer) and for an association with the invoice.

You can identify yourself (eg to determine the age/type of your device) by

- the invoice number or
- the customer ID or
- the exact name printed on the invoice

The serial number and the license name for the compiler are not suitable for identification

Q: can I get a replacement for a blown-up dongle or can I get another dongle?

A: additional dongles are NOT sold. If one is destroyed, you can buy the same type by an exchange. The price is the same as for a standard ISP3

AVRco related Questions

Q: why do some programs not need the dongle to be compiled?

Q: is anything at all possible without the dongle (eg with laptop on the train)

A: the compiler checks the dongle from about 4k hex file size (demo limit).

In addition it is checked when profi functions are compiled (file system, graphics, ...).
Without the dongle the compilation is possible to allow a syntax check, but no valid hex file is created!

If you get only the error “programmer not found” the syntax is OK.

Otherwise also the syntax errors are displayed

Q: why is it suddenly not possible to download updates?

A: each AVRco package includes 1 year of free updates/downloads.

The user account on the download server has a limited lifetime of these 12 months.

You can buy further upgrade protection for one year at a fee of 25% of the actual price

Q: must I always remain licensed to have no disadvantages?

A: at the moment this is not the case. You may remain any length of time without an upgrade, use your “old” version and buy the upgrade package later under the same terms

Q: why do you still offer some distributors the UPP-USB?

A: the distributors have the information that the UPP-USB is out of production and get datasheets and images of the successors.

As long as they can get the UPP-USB from the pool of spare devices they do not need to change their offers

Q: do the actual AVRprog.exe / PackProg.exe work with the UPP-USB?

A: AVRprog works. The counterpart of PackProg.exe was PackLoader.exe.

Only PackLoader works with the UPP-USB

Q: what are the prices of the new DLLs to control one and several UPP1-X?

A: the free DLL controls one UPP1-X, a licence for controlling up to 32 UPP1-X costs €250

It does not work with the UPP-USB programmers.

Q: in the case of emergency – where can I get an older driver?

A: There is no official source. Try everything possible to find the old CD or an old installation. Only if all else fails I am willing to search through my backups for a version that should fit. After a temporary installation I can mail the necessary files. I need the exact type and the programmers’ production date. You may contact me at gb@e-lab.de

Q: why does Windows show the error “a driver could not be found”?

A: Windows is often not able to locate the driver automatically or tries to use an older driver from its driver cache. Usually the “select driver manually” and “have disk” can force the installation of the correct file by navigating to the corresponding .inf file. In rare cases one must locate and erase the old .inf file in the driver cache. The installation tries also an automatic installation. But it seems that this is not always successful

Q: what does “the driver is not digitally signed” mean?

Q: how can this issue be resolved with Windows 8?

A: it is too expensive to sign the driver at Microsoft. This is usual for many manufacturers and it is safe to install these drivers as long they are not from a dubious source. Up to Windows 7 (32 bit) it was easy with the button “install anyway”. Windows 8 (and Windows 7 64 bit) has the same function but hides it from the user. With the installation a .pdf "Installing unsigned drivers in WIN8-64.pdf" is copied to your disk

Q: is it possible to distribute my software for programming to an external provider and am I protected from pirate copies?

Q: is there a possibility to limit the number of programming cycles at such a provider?

A: both of these are possible with X-programmers if the target programmer is any “X” type. In this case outside the two programmers there is only AES encrypted data. There is no way to log any data or reverse engineer your program.