

NTRLS IT: Real Stories  
**Sagebrush's Athena using a Star TSP200-24 and Windows Vista**

**Issue / Problem:**

For libraries running Athena and using a receipt printer (typically a Star TSP200-24), when they want to upgrade their computers to Vista they can't find drivers for this particular printer.

**Background Information you should know about:**

What is Athena? Athena is Sagebrush's automation software for small libraries (small to medium collections). What is a receipt printer? It's a printer typically used by point of sale scenarios to produce for the customer a printed record showing what has been purchased, but in the case of libraries and patrons, it is used to show what has been checked out and when the checked out items are due back to the library. What is Windows Vista? Windows Vista is Microsoft's next generation of the Windows operating system. What are drivers? Drivers are typically used to tell operating systems how to use hardware. What is a Star TSP200-24? The Star TSP200-24 is a receipt printer used with Athena to provide receipts to patrons after checking items out from the library.

**Resolution / How we solved the problem:**

This situation is an interesting one. With Athena being so old, the last version revision was 9.3, and was released about the time Windows XP was released. Since then Sagebrush was bought by Follett and Athena was shelved because Sagebrush wanted it replaced by InfoCentre just before the purchase of their company. Follett still supports Athena but no new updates will be released for Athena.

For those Libraries out there that are still using Athena and this receipt printer, if you are considering moving on to Vista, you basically have 2 options with a 3<sup>rd</sup> option being hard to come by. I have installed Athena on Vista computers and Athena does work. However, the receipt printer does not, due to the drivers for the printer. No one is making a Vista print driver for this receipt printer. I looked everywhere and tried several ways of installing the Windows NT-2000 drivers with Vista with no luck. The printer drivers that came from Sagebrush are only for 95/98/ME/NT and Windows 2000. In fact, working with XP, it is using backwards compatibility to Windows 2000 to allow it to work in XP. Unfortunately this will not work in Vista. So if you use Windows Vista then you are stuck with no receipt printer if you have the computer hosting the printer.

**Option 1:**

This may not be the solution you want to hear to this problem, but it is one that may be necessary due to the situation at hand. It is to upgrade to a new Automation System and a new receipt printer. There are several reasons for this, one being that Athena has been shelved and is no longer receiving upgrades. In fact when I called Follett about this issue, they told me from their Sagebrush support department that they hadn't even thought about running Athena on Windows XP, let alone trying to run it on Vista.

#### Option 2:

If you want to stick with Athena and keep the receipt printer working, simply upgrade all your other computers to Windows Vista and keep the one or two computers or however many receipt printers you have, running Windows XP, until you decide to do Option1. Windows XP Pro and Vista Business can talk to each other fine in the Windows domain.

#### Option 3:

This one I don't see happening anytime soon nor possibly at all. A new Vista driver might be written for the Star TSP200-24 printer, or you might know someone or pay a company to write one for you. Good luck with this one. I don't know anyone that can do this or who would do it for a reduced cost or for free. If anyone out there in the Library community can find a driver that works or knows someone that can write one for this printer, please contact me and I'll gladly pass on the information to everyone who needs it.