

OKIDATA PRINTER FIRMWARE AND UPDATES

By Joe Cachia and the Technical Staff at UniNet

This is the third in our series of newsletters on printer firmware and updates.

In our earlier editions, we noted that our industry continues to experience “OEM Firmware Updates” and the (at times) disastrous results on replacement chip functionality. Previously, we covered HP and Samsung firmware; this issue will review Okidata.

The fact that a firmware update sometimes results in failures of previously successful replacement chips is a concern. Aftermarket chip manufacturers must evaluate both OEM chip *functionality* and *potential* in order to determine the impact of future updates. As OEM chip complexity (higher level encryption, multiple encryption layers and proprietary chip architecture) increases, replacement chip development time and costs rise significantly.

The OEMs use firmware updates to resolve machine functionality issues or to improve features on respective machines. As more machine settings and sensing become digitally controlled (to improve print quality and minimize hardware issues), firmware updates are important for OEMs to keep field installations up-to-date. In fact, many OEMs now have specific “Firmware Update” links on their websites to facilitate the updates.

Constant monitoring of firmware update availability is critical. UniNet routinely reviews OEM sites for updates on key products by machine, by region.

Historically, Okidata had little or no firmware information available on their website. Although there has been a “Firmware Update Tool” on the Okidata website, little information is available. Critical firmware updates often required contacting Technical Support to work through the installation.

In the last six months however, Okidata, through installation of their “Firmware Update Tool,” released firmware updates for specific machines. Currently, the affected machines are all relatively new models, so going forward, we expect future model releases to also use this utility. The most recent updates are dated 9/24/14.

The affected machines include the following:

C911	B701	MC332	MPS2731MC	MB441
C931	B721/B731	MC342	MC562	MB451
C941	ES7131	MB461	MB491+	ES4161MFP
ES9411	MPS5501B	MB461+LP	MB491+LP	ES4191MFP
ES9431	ES3452MFP	MB471	MC352	MPS4200MB
ES9541	ES5462MFP	MB491	MC362	MPS4700MB



Recent Internet articles have suggested that these updates will block aftermarket chips from functioning. So far, field reports and initial lab tests have **not** confirmed this to be the case. Note that the firmware update is not a simple *driver* update. There are several steps in the process, and the Oki Device Search function must identify the machine or updating is not possible.

UniNet will continue monitoring firmware updates and routinely check current product for issues. This is no simple task, but we believe the effort is justified in reducing customer issues.

UniNet seeks to provide the most recent and best available information through this website. All information contained or referenced herein, regardless of the form, is provided "as is" without any express or implied warranties, including but not limited to implied warranties of accuracy, merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. The materials presented, displayed or referenced at this site are solely for informational purposes only and are subject to being incomplete, outdated, inaccurate or otherwise unreliable and should not be used to satisfy legal or other mandatory obligations. UniNet, its officers, agents, and employees shall not be liable for damages of any kind which are, or may be, incurred by the use or access of any information contained in, or relating to, this World Wide Web site.