

# The USB-to-Serial Converter

This document can be downloaded as a PDF from [softbyte.co.uk/cablelinkmanuals.htm](http://softbyte.co.uk/cablelinkmanuals.htm)



Older type with  
Prolific chipset



Current type with  
FTDI chipset

## Introduction

The USB Serial Converter attaches to a PC USB port and provides a serial port connector, to which any of the following serial DesignaKnit cables can be attached:

- Silverlink 3 (for PE1)
- Brotherlink 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5
- E6000 Link 1 or 2
- E8000 Link
- Screenlink

It is NOT suitable for use with the following legacy cables:

- Silverlink 1 or 2
- Singerlink

The Silverlink 4 and 5 have their own USB connection and therefore do not require the Converter.

A variety of USB serial converters are commercially available, but not all of them will work with DesignaKnit cables. This is because the Brother PPD and knitting machines, and Silver Reed PE1, were not designed to communicate with PCs, and our cables with magnetic switches for detecting carriage passes are also not standard serial devices.

The Converter may be connected to any type of USB-A port: 1, 2, or 3.

## Installing the Driver

Identify older converters at <https://softbyte.co.uk/usbtoserialconvertermodels.htm>. For the older type download the Prolific driver from <https://softbyte.co.uk/prolificusbconverterdrivers.htm> and ignore the rest of this section.

The process varies according to the version of Windows and whether the same driver already happens to be installed for a similar device. All the DesignaKnit cable links, and many other devices use the same driver.

Installing the driver should be done by an Administrator Windows user. If your computer doesn't offer you a choice of user names when starting up, it almost certainly means you are an Administrator user.

Insert the USB cable into a standard USB port on your computer. Windows will recognize that the cable link has been attached and may show a message saying that it is searching for a driver. A message may appear to say that devices are being installed or it might say that the best driver is already installed. If Windows requests the driver, follow one of these options:

- If your computer has a RISC or ARM processor, refer to the topic at the bottom of this webpage: <https://softbyte.co.uk/cablelinksdriver.htm>.
- For Windows CE, download the driver from <http://www.ftdichip.com/Drivers/VCP.htm>;
- For other computers and other versions of Windows download the driver from here <https://softbyte.co.uk/download/DKdrivers.zip>

When Windows requests the driver, select the file you have downloaded. Finally Windows may ask you to restart the computer - if so, do it.

If your DesignaKnit computer is not connected to the internet, copy the downloaded file onto a USB drive or other removable media and transfer it to the DesignaKnit computer.

If the driver does not appear to have installed correctly, see the Troubleshooting section at the end of this manual.

## Finding the new port number in DesignaKnit 8 or 9

DesignaKnit 8 or 9 can do this automatically when the attached serial cable is one of the following:

- Brotherlink 2, 4 or 5
- E6000 link 2
- E8000 link 1 or 2
- Screenlink.

For these cable types, proceed as follows. Make sure the USB Converter is attached to a USB connector on the PC, and that the DesignaKnit link is connected to the Converter. Start DesignaKnit and go to Interactive Knitting. Close the opening dialogue and from the main Interactive Knitting menu select Options / Knitting machine. Make sure your knitting machine is selected from the list. Make sure that Magnetic Switch Link is selected in the list of link types. Select Setup / Find Link, and then Start Search. Finish by selecting OK twice.

If the attached cable is a serial Brotherlink 1, serial Brotherlink 3, serial E6000 link 1, or serial Silverlink 3, it will be necessary to use Device Manager as follows...

1. From "My Computer" select "Control Panel" (it may also be necessary to select "Performance and Maintenance" or "System and Security") then "System".
2. Select "Hardware" and then "Device Manager".
3. Select View / Devices by type.

4. In the list of devices, double click on "Ports (COM & LPT)".
5. This will produce additional lines in the list of devices, one for each port that the computer has. Each new line will be something like "Communications Port (COM1) or "Printer port (LPT1)".
6. Find one called "USB serial port" or similar. The COM number that the driver has assigned is shown in brackets. The COM number is the same as a port number. DesignaKnit 8 and 9 are able to use any port number up to 99.
7. Start DesignaKnit and go to Interactive Knitting. Close the opening dialogue and from the main Interactive Knitting menu select Options / Knitting machine / Setup. Make sure your knitting machine is selected from the list. Set the serial port to the same number that you found listed in Device Manager. For the serial Brotherlink 1, make sure that Serial Brotherlink 1 is selected from the list of link types so that interactive knitting will work. Finish by selecting OK twice.

## Finding the new port number in DesignaKnit 7

It is necessary to use Device Manager as follows...

1. From "My Computer" select "Control Panel" (it may also be necessary to select "Performance and Maintenance" or "System and Security") then "System".
2. Select "Hardware" and then "Device Manager".
3. Select View / Devices by type.
4. In the list of devices, double click on "Ports (COM & LPT)".
5. This will produce additional lines in the list of devices, one for each port that the computer has. Each new line will be something like "Communications Port (COM1) or "Printer port (LPT1)".
6. Find one called "USB serial port" or similar. The COM number that the driver has assigned is shown in brackets. The COM number is the same as a port number.
7. DesignaKnit 7 is unable to use any number above 9. If the number that has been assigned by Windows is higher than 9, please see "Changing the port number" under Troubleshooting.
8. If the port number is 9 or below, start DesignaKnit 7 and go to Interactive Knitting. Close the opening dialogue and from the main Interactive Knitting menu select Options / Knitting machine / Setup. Set the serial port to the same number that you found listed in Device Manager. Finish by selecting OK twice.

## Updating the driver from the internet

If the CD that contains the driver is more than a few months old, it may be necessary to update the driver. If your DesignaKnit PC is connected to the internet this can be done as follows.

Do steps 1 to 6 under "Finding the number of the new serial port", right click on "USB Serial port" or "Prolific USB Serial port" and select Properties. Under the Driver tab, select Update Driver. If the option to search the internet (this time only) is offered, take it. The search can take a few minutes.

If your knitting PC is not connected to the internet, you can download the current driver from a PC that is connected to the internet by going to <https://softbyte.co.uk/cablelinksdriver.htm> . Transfer the downloaded driver to

removable media and transfer it to the knitting PC. Use it in the way described under "Installing the driver" (for media other than CDs the same principles apply).

## Troubleshooting

If Windows reported a problem when trying to install the driver from the internet, or Device Manager shows a yellow error icon next to the serial port, or there is a yellow error icon next to an "Unknown device", follow the instructions at <https://softbyte.co.uk/cablelinksdriver.htm>.

If your DesignaKnit computer is not connected to the internet, download a driver installer from this web page and transfer it on a pen drive to the DesignaKnit computer: <https://softbyte.co.uk/cablelinksdriver.htm>.

Updating the cable link driver: please see <https://softbyte.co.uk/updatinganexistingdriver.htm>

### Updating the Driver from the Internet

From time to time the manufacturer of the chips in the Converter publishes a new driver because a modification may be necessary for it to work with newly published Windows updates. We recommend that from time to time you follow the instructions on this webpage to keep the driver updated. If you have a problem with the cable link at any time it is a good idea to update the driver before contacting technical support. <https://softbyte.co.uk/updatinganexistingdriver.htm>

### Updates to this manual

The document you are reading was updated in September 2024.

The most recent editions of cable link manuals including this one may be found at <https://softbyte.co.uk/cablelinkmanuals.htm>

For any latest information about USB to serial converters, please see <https://softbyte.co.uk/usbtoserialconvertermodels.htm>

The most recent version of the driver installer for the current FTDI type of converter is available here: [https://softbyte.co.uk/download/USB Links Driver Installer.exe](https://softbyte.co.uk/download/USB%20Links%20Driver%20Installer.exe)

The most recent version of the driver installer for the Prolific converter is available here: [https://softbyte.co.uk/download/USB Links Driver Installer.exe](https://softbyte.co.uk/download/USB%20Links%20Driver%20Installer.exe)

The most recent version of the zipped driver files for the Prolific converter is available here: [https://softbyte.co.uk/download/Old USB Converter Driver Files.zip](https://softbyte.co.uk/download/Old%20USB%20Converter%20Driver%20Files.zip) **Some users have found that the driver installer doesn't work but that this driver does work.**