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Windows 10 and 11 with Trek Thumbdrive Keys

Background

For many years, one package for a Braille2000 software license has been the USB flash drive device called the Trek Thumbdrive Smart. There are both the original version and the "2" version (showing a red 2). The Braille2000 license credential is stored within the device as device data, not as filesystem data, i.e., not in any file written in the usual way. This means that the license credential will NOT be erased even if you perform a "format" operation in Windows (format clears all files and resets a drive to 100% free space).

The Problem

Windows 10 and 11 don't recognize the device. The flash drive works fine on older computers (e.g., Windows 7 and 8) and used to work on Windows 10 and 11 until a recent Windows update. The computer makes the usual "chirp" when the flash drive is inserted or removed, but it does not show up as a drive letter under "This PC" and Braille2000 appears not to see it and cannot grab the license to launch.

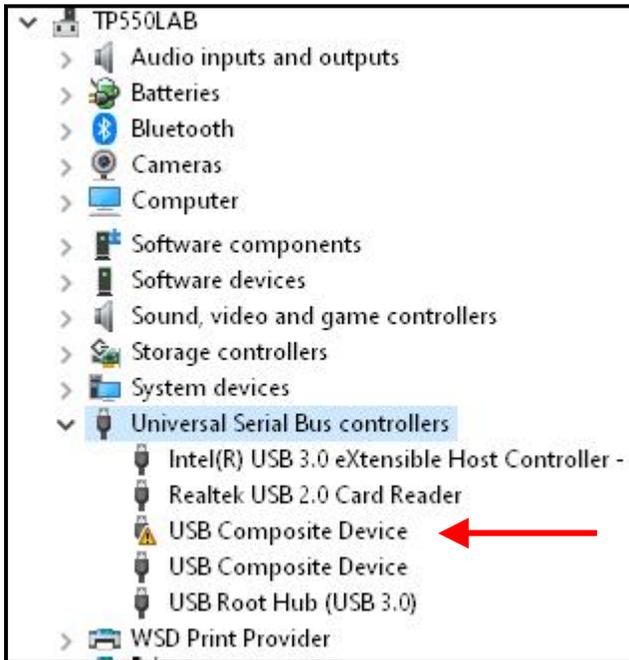
The actual problem is that the device identification codes (hard-coded in the device) are now thought, by Windows, to be something else (something not a flash drive), and Windows doesn't know how to behave.

Problem Verification

Follow these steps to determine if the issued addressed here applies to you. We assume you have a Braille2000 flash drive Key that says "Trek Thumbdrive Smart" on one side, and that when you plug it in, Windows "chirps". Go ahead and plug in the flash drive.

Then open the Windows Device Manager. Do that by pressing the "windows key" with "x" and then pressing "m". Or you can right-click the Windows icon in the system tray and then click on "Device Manager" in the popup menu. The "windows key" is left of the spacebar situated between ctrl and alt (and on a laptop, between fn and alt). Its logo is the Windows logo. The goal is to open the Device Manager application. To use it, you will need administrator access rights on the computer.

You should see device data, in the form of a hierarchy similar to what is shown just below. The top line is the name of your computer. The second level is device category namee. The third level



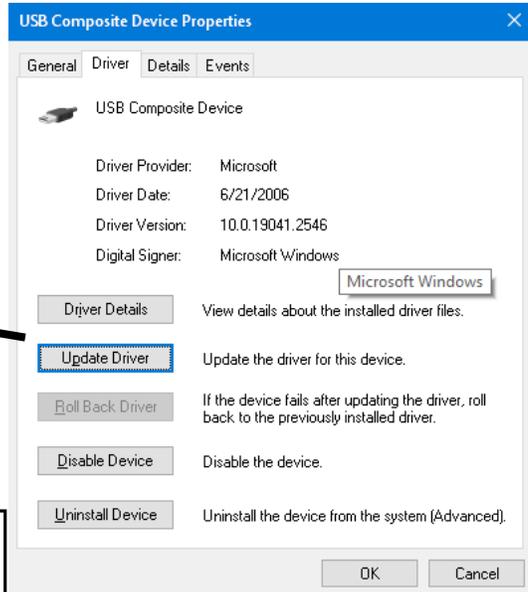
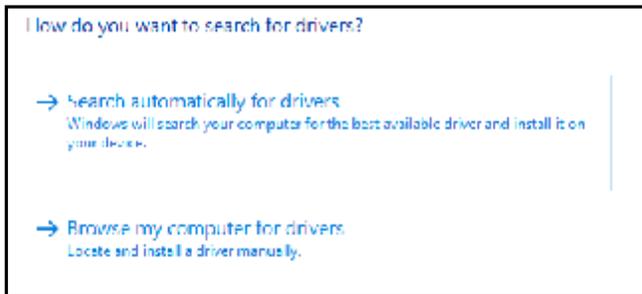
is individual devices. You are looking for a USB device (i.e., indented under "Universal Serial Bus controllers") that is unknown, as indicated by the icon ! overlay.



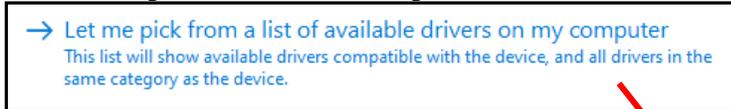
As shown by the red arrow, the mark is on the "USB Composite Device", what Windows thinks Trek Thumbdrive Smart is (but it isn't). To make sure, unplug the flash drive and see if the line vanishes. Plug in the drive and the line should return. Find the item that behaves this way. Then right-click that line and choose Properties.

You should see a Properties box like what shows below-right. We need to re-specify the

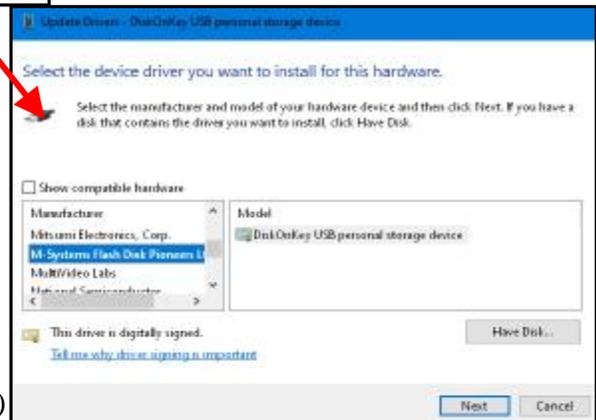
driver... click the Update Driver button. You will then see the choice box showing directly below: Click "Browse ..."



In the next panel, click "Let me pick..."



(In the dialog box at the right) Remove the checkmark on "Show compatible hardware" and then find and click "M-Systems Flash Disk..." in the left column and then click Next. There will be a warning message popup... click Yes. Then close all Device Manager windows and unplug the flash drive. You may be required to restart Windows.



When you plug in the flash drive, Windows should assign it a drive letter (under ThisPC in File Explorer) and Braille2000 should see it and use it.

Note that after the driver change, it will be listed in Device Manager as "Disk OnKey USB personal storage device" (the currently known Windows device most like Thumbdrive Smart).