



Running on Empty: a new feature for Lexmark Color Printers

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Overview

Running on empty allows the color printers to continue printing in black and white with an empty color cartridge. There are times when the user just needs to get a printed page and if a color cartridge is empty, they are willing to accept the output in black and white instead of the requested color.

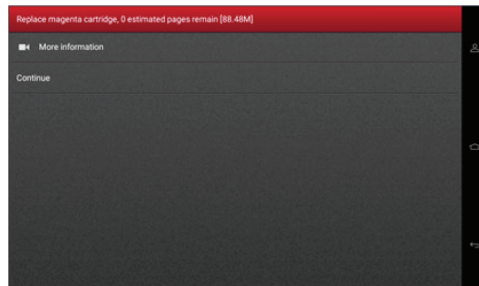
How does it work?

In previous color products with the toner only cartridges, the printer would stop whenever one of the four cartridges when empty. At that time, the only way to get a print job out would require replacing the exhausted cartridge.

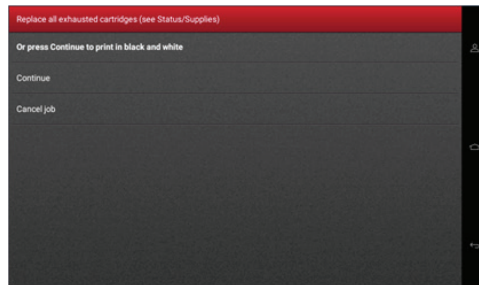
The "Running on Empty" will allow the printer to continue printing even if one of the color (cyan, magenta, or yellow) cartridges is empty. The only requirements are that the black cartridge is not empty and the empty color cartridge is still in the printer.

How to enable Running on Empty?

When a color cartridge goes empty and the printer was able to complete the job, the printer will prompt the user with the following message.



The user has one of two options. First they can replace the cartridge and continue printing in color with no interruption. Or second, they can choose to continue which will enable the "Running on Empty" and then when the user sends a new job to the printer, they will be prompted with the following message.

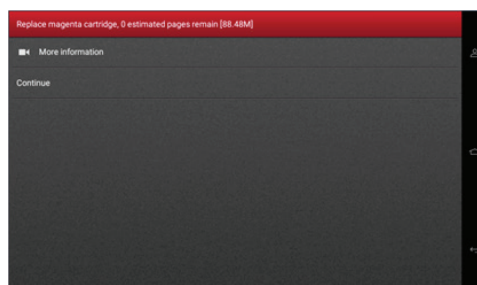


The user has one of three options. The first option is to replace the empty cartridge and the printer will automatically start printing the job in color. The second option is to select "Continue" which will print the job in black and white. The third option is to select "Cancel" to cancel the job so that it can be resent once a new color cartridge is installed.

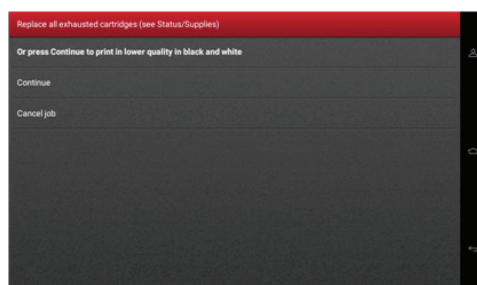
Also when in the "Running on Empty" mode, if the job is originally black and white, the printer will print without any prompting.

What happens in the middle of a print job?

When a color cartridge goes empty in the middle of a long job, the printer will still prompt the user to replace the cartridge.



The user can choose to either replace the empty color cartridge or "Continue". If they select "Continue", then the next prompt will ask them if they want to continue printing the job in black and white in a lower quality. In this case the color job is converted to black and white after being rendered in color. So there will be some difference in quality from a job that has been rendered in black and white. At any time the user can replace the empty color cartridge and the printer will resume printing the job in color.



The above scenarios are valid for printing either from the network port, USB port or USB thumb drive. The copy function will behave similar to the print except that if the job was scanned in color it will not convert a color copy to black and white.

How to avoid the prompts?

The user can avoid the prompts by setting the printer to print only in black and white in the configuration menu. A word of caution here - the selection is maintained and the printer will not automatically revert back to the color mode once a color cartridge is installed.

Limits

There is a limit of printing only 2,000 pages in the "Running on Empty" mode. This is due to the system limitations that require periodic calibration.

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