BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Printing with Wi-Fi Direct — When There's No Router (HP, Canon, Brother & Epson)

Print straight from your phone or laptop to the printer, with no home Wi-Fi needed, plus fixes for the usual hiccups

Plain-English tech help from:

Bill's Home Tech

Portage County, Ohio

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

The 60-Second Version 3

The Short Version 3

When Wi-Fi Direct Makes Sense 4

How It Works, in Plain English 4

Before You Start 5

HP Printers: Turning On Wi-Fi Direct 6

HP Printers: Connecting and Printing 7

Canon Printers: Wireless Direct 7

Brother Printers: Wi-Fi Direct 8

Epson Printers: Wi-Fi Direct (Simple AP) 9

Printing from a Laptop over Wi-Fi Direct 9

Keeping It Safe 10

Troubleshooting Wi-Fi Direct 11

When the Real Problem Is the Home Wi-Fi 11

A Quick Card to Keep by the Printer 12

When to Call Bill 13

Everyday Cheat Sheet 14

A Note From Bill 15

Your Visit — and My Promise 16

SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Wi-Fi Direct lets your device connect straight to the printer, with no router needed. Turn it on at the printer: HP's Wi-Fi Direct icon or button, Canon's LAN settings then Wireless Direct, Brother's Network then Wi-Fi Direct then Manual, or Epson's Wi-Fi Setup then Wi-Fi Direct. Note the network name, which usually starts with DIRECT, and the password.

Join that network on your phone or laptop, stay connected when it warns there's no internet, and print from the maker's app or the built-in Print option. Rejoin your home Wi-Fi when you're done.

1 The Short Version

Wi-Fi Direct lets your phone, tablet, or laptop talk straight to your printer, with no home Wi-Fi in between. The printer makes its own tiny private network, and your device joins it just long enough to print. It's a lifesaver when the router is down, when you're at a cabin or camper with no internet, or when a visitor needs to print and you'd rather not hand out your Wi-Fi password.

Almost every wireless printer from HP, Canon, Brother, and Epson can do it, though each brand names it a little differently. This guide explains when to use it, how to turn it on for each brand, and how to fix the usual hiccups.

- Wi-Fi Direct is a private printer-to-device connection with no router needed.
- HP and Brother call it Wi-Fi Direct; Canon calls it Wireless Direct; Epson calls it Wi-Fi Direct, sometimes Simple AP.
- While connected, your phone or laptop usually can't reach the internet. That's normal.
- The printer shows or prints its own network name and password.
- It's a backup method. For everyday printing, the home Wi-Fi is usually easier.

TIP

Look at your printer's screen or control panel for a small icon that looks like a Wi-Fi symbol with a D, or a phone and printer with arrows. That's often the shortcut to the Wi-Fi Direct settings.

2 When Wi-Fi Direct Makes Sense

Wi-Fi Direct isn't meant to replace normal network printing. It's the tool you reach for when normal printing isn't possible or isn't a good idea.

- The internet or router is down and you need to print something now.
- You're at a cabin, camper, or event with no Wi-Fi at all.
- A guest, grandchild, or caregiver needs to print, and you'd rather not share your Wi-Fi password.
- A work laptop is on a separate network or VPN and can't see the home printer.
- You're setting up a brand-new printer and want to test it before joining it to Wi-Fi.

GOOD TO KNOW

When Wi-Fi Direct may not be the best choice: if several family members print every day, keeping the printer on the home Wi-Fi is simpler. Each person doesn't have to switch networks each time. My guide "Connecting a Wireless Printer to Your Wi-Fi" covers that: billshometech.com/guides/connect-wireless-printer-wifi.

3 How It Works, in Plain English

Normally, your phone and your printer both connect to your router, and the router passes the print job between them, like two people talking through a switchboard. With Wi-Fi Direct, the printer becomes its own little switchboard. It broadcasts a Wi-Fi network with a name that usually starts with DIRECT, and your phone joins it directly.

- The printer's Direct network has its own name and its own password, separate from your home Wi-Fi.
- Your device can be connected to only one Wi-Fi network at a time, so it leaves your home Wi-Fi while printing.
- Most printers allow a handful of devices at once. Canon's manuals list up to five and Epson's up to eight on the models we checked.
- The printer can usually stay on your home Wi-Fi at the same time, so others can keep printing normally.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Your phone may warn that the DIRECT network has no internet and offer to switch back. Choose to stay connected. Otherwise the phone hops back to your home Wi-Fi and the print job never arrives.

4 Before You Start

A little preparation makes the first connection painless.

1. If you can, install the printer maker's app on your phone while you still have internet: the HP app, Canon PRINT, Brother Mobile Connect (or Brother iPrint&Scan), or Epson Smart Panel.
2. Find your printer's exact model name, usually printed on the front or top.
3. Make sure the printer is on, awake, and has paper.
4. Have a pen and paper handy to write down the printer's Direct network name and password.

> **TIP**
>
> iPhones and iPads can often print over Wi-Fi Direct without any app, using AirPrint from the Share button. Android phones can use the built-in Default Print Service or Mopria. The maker's app adds scanning and ink levels, so it's still worth having.

5 HP Printers: Turning On Wi-Fi Direct

Most HP wireless printers have Wi-Fi Direct. How you reach it depends on whether your printer has a touchscreen.

HP printers with a touchscreen

1. On the printer's home screen, tap the Wi-Fi Direct icon, or tap the connection or network information icon and then Wi-Fi Direct.
2. Open Wi-Fi Direct settings and make sure it's turned on.
3. Note the Wi-Fi Direct name (it often starts with DIRECT) and the password shown on the screen.

HP printers without a touchscreen

1. Look for a Wi-Fi Direct button or light on the control panel and press it to turn it on.
2. To find the name and password, print a network configuration or Wi-Fi Direct page. On many models you press the Information button, or hold it, and a page prints.
3. Find the Wi-Fi Direct name and password on that page.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> In 2025, HP replaced its HP Smart phone app with a new app simply called HP. If an older guide tells you to open HP Smart, use the HP app instead. Your printer usually carries over automatically.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

6 HP Printers: Connecting and Printing

1. On your phone or laptop, open the Wi-Fi settings.
2. Choose the network that starts with DIRECT and includes your printer's model name.
3. Enter the Wi-Fi Direct password from the printer's screen or the printed page.
4. If the phone says there's no internet, choose to stay connected.
5. Open the document or photo, tap Share or the three-dot menu, choose Print, and pick your HP printer.
6. When you're done, go back to Wi-Fi settings and rejoin your home network.

WATCH OUT

Some HP printers that use HP+ or Instant Ink want to stay connected to the internet. Printing over Wi-Fi Direct still works for the moment, but if the printer is cut off from the internet for a long time, it may complain. My guide "HP+ Printer Went Offline Because the Internet Blipped" covers that: billshometech.com/guides/hp-printer-went-offline-because-internet-blipped.

7 Canon Printers: Wireless Direct

Canon calls its version Wireless Direct. On most PIXMA and MAXIFY models, it's turned on from the printer's LAN settings.

1. On the printer's home screen, open LAN settings (sometimes under Settings or a network icon).
2. Choose Wireless Direct.
3. Turn it on, or choose Enable, and confirm.
4. The screen shows the printer's network name and password. Write them down.
5. On your phone or laptop, join that network and enter the password.
6. Print from the Canon PRINT app, or use your phone's built-in Print option.

TIP

Some Canon models offer a Connect to smartphone option that shows a QR code. Scanning it with the phone's camera can join the network for you. If the QR code doesn't work, use the manual name-and-password method.

GOOD TO KNOW

Canon notes that turning on Wireless Direct on some models can change how the printer connects to your router. After you're done, print a test page from a home computer to make sure regular Wi-Fi printing still works.

8 Brother Printers: Wi-Fi Direct

Brother printers offer Wi-Fi Direct with a choice of quick push-button pairing or manual setup. Manual setup works with almost any phone or laptop.

1. On the printer, open Settings (or Menu), then All Settings, then Network, then Wi-Fi Direct.
2. Choose Manual. The printer shows its network name (SSID) and password.
3. On your phone or laptop, join that network and type in the password.
4. Back on the printer, press OK if asked. It should say Connected.
5. Print from Brother Mobile Connect, Brother iPrint&Scan, or your phone's built-in Print option.

TIP

Brother also offers Push Button setup: choose Wi-Fi Direct, then Push Button, on the printer, then start Wi-Fi Direct on a phone that supports it. It's quicker when it works, but Manual is the most reliable method across phones.

GOOD TO KNOW

Menu names vary between Brother models, especially between touchscreen and button models. If your screen doesn't match, look up your exact model on Brother's support site and search for Wi-Fi Direct.

9 Epson Printers: Wi-Fi Direct (Simple AP)

Epson calls it Wi-Fi Direct, and some manuals call it Simple AP mode. Epson suggests installing the Epson Smart Panel app on your phone before connecting.

1. Install Epson Smart Panel on your phone while you still have internet.
2. On the printer's home screen, open Wi-Fi Setup, then Wi-Fi Direct. Some models label it Smartphone connect.
3. Choose Start Setup (or press OK). The printer shows a network name and password.
4. Open Smart Panel and choose the printer, or join the network in your phone's Wi-Fi settings and enter the password.
5. When it connects, select Complete or OK on the printer.
6. Print from Smart Panel or from your phone's Print option.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Look for a small Wi-Fi Direct icon on the printer's screen. Epson's help pages note that if the icon isn't showing, Wi-Fi Direct isn't turned on, so repeat the steps.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Some Epson models offer Other Methods, with a QR code for iPhone or an option for Android. These do the same job as typing the name and password.

10 Printing from a Laptop over Wi-Fi Direct

Laptops can use Wi-Fi Direct too, but there's one more step. The laptop has to install the printer the first time it connects this way.

1. Join the printer's DIRECT network from the laptop's Wi-Fi menu and enter its password.
2. On Windows: open Settings, then Bluetooth & devices, then Printers & scanners, and choose Add device. Pick the printer when it appears.

3. On a Mac: open System Settings, then Printers & Scanners, click Add Printer, and choose the printer.
4. Print a test page.
5. Rejoin your home Wi-Fi when you're done.

WATCH OUT

A work laptop may not be allowed to join other networks, or its security software may block it. Ask your employer's IT department before using Wi-Fi Direct on a work laptop.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

11 Keeping It Safe

Wi-Fi Direct is protected by its own password, so a passerby can't just print to your printer or snoop on your print jobs. A few habits keep it that way.

- Don't post the Direct password where visitors can see it, such as taped to the printer, unless you want everyone using it.
- If you share the password with a guest, you can change it afterward in the printer's Wi-Fi Direct settings.
- If you never use Wi-Fi Direct, you can turn it off in the printer's settings.
- Keep the printer's firmware updated, using the maker's app or the printer's settings.

GOOD TO KNOW

Turning Wi-Fi Direct on or off doesn't affect normal printing over your home Wi-Fi on most printers. They're separate settings.

12 Troubleshooting Wi-Fi Direct

What you see	Try this first
I can't find the DIRECT network	Check Wi-Fi Direct is turned on; restart the printer; move closer
Wrong password	Re-check the printer screen or print a new network page; passwords are case-sensitive
Phone keeps switching back to home Wi-Fi	Choose to stay connected when warned there's no internet
Connected but the printer doesn't show up	Close and reopen the app; restart the phone; try the built-in Print option
Too many devices connected	Disconnect another phone or laptop; most printers allow only a few at once
Home Wi-Fi printing stopped	Print a network page, check the printer is still on the home Wi-Fi, and reconnect it if needed

TIP

Restarting the printer fixes a surprising number of Wi-Fi Direct problems. Turn it off with its power button, wait 30 seconds, and turn it back on before trying anything fancy.

13 When the Real Problem Is the Home Wi-Fi

If you find yourself using Wi-Fi Direct every day because regular printing never works, the real fix is usually the printer's connection to your home Wi-Fi. These guides tackle that directly.

- Why Your Printer Says Offline (and How to Fix It for Good): billshometech.com/guides/printer-says-offline-the-permanent-fix
- Why Cheap Printers Only Work on 2.4GHz Wi-Fi: billshometech.com/guides/why-cheap-printers-only-work-2-4ghz-wi
- Printing From Your Phone or Tablet (AirPrint & Mopria): billshometech.com/guides/printing-from-phone-tablet-airprint-mopria
- Connect a Printer by USB When Wi-Fi Won't Cooperate: billshometech.com/guides/connect-a-printer-by-usb-wi-fi-wont

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Working from home with a separate work network? My home office network guide explains how printers and separated networks get along: billshometech.com/guides/home-office-network-wired-desk-work-laptop.

14 A Quick Card to Keep by the Printer

Fill this in once, and printing without Wi-Fi becomes a two-minute job for anyone in the house.

- Printer model: _____
- What the brand calls it: Wi-Fi Direct / Wireless Direct / Simple AP
- How to turn it on: _____
- Direct network name: _____
- Password: kept somewhere private, not taped to the printer
- App to use: HP / Canon PRINT / Brother Mobile Connect / Epson Smart Panel

> **TIP**
> Take a photo of the printer's Wi-Fi Direct screen once it's set up, and keep it in a private album on your phone. Next time, you'll have the name and password in seconds.

15 When to Call Bill

Wi-Fi Direct is simple once it's set up, but every brand and model hides the setting in a different place, and printers can be stubborn. If you'd like it done for you, or if your printer won't print any way at all, Bill can help, with 30+ years of professional experience solving exactly this kind of puzzle.

- You can't find the Wi-Fi Direct setting on your printer.
- Your phone or laptop connects but won't print.
- You want Wi-Fi Direct set up for a guest, caregiver, or camper.
- Regular Wi-Fi printing has stopped working and you're tired of workarounds.
- You want to know whether your printer is worth fixing or replacing.

Bill's help is $49 for a remote session or $99 for an in-home visit. Call (330) 200-8042 and tell him your printer's brand and model. Many printer problems can be sorted out remotely.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the printer. Turn on Direct, join the DIRECT network, stay connected, print, then rejoin home Wi-Fi.

I want to…	Do this…
Turn it on (HP)	Tap the Wi-Fi Direct icon, or press the Wi-Fi Direct button; print a network page for the password
Turn it on (Canon)	LAN settings › Wireless Direct › Enable
Turn it on (Brother)	Settings › All Settings › Network › Wi-Fi Direct › Manual
Turn it on (Epson)	Wi-Fi Setup › Wi-Fi Direct › Start Setup
Connect my phone	Join the network starting with DIRECT, enter its password, stay connected
Fix it	Restart the printer, re-check the password, and stay on the DIRECT network
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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