BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Scanner Works but Printer Doesn't (or Vice Versa)

When half of your all-in-one works and the other half doesn't — what that tells you, and how to fix it

Plain-English printer help from:

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

An all-in-one is really two machines — a printer and a scanner — sharing one box, each with its own software path. When one half works and the other doesn't, the machine is almost certainly fine; the broken half's software or connection needs rebuilding. Restart both devices first.

The reliable fix is reinstalling the maker's FULL app (HP Smart, Canon PRINT, Epson Smart Panel, Brother Mobile Connect), not Windows' basic print-only driver. If scans won't reach email or a folder, rebuild that setup or scan to the phone app. A USB test tells you whether it is the connection or the software.

1 The Short Version

An all-in-one is really two machines sharing one box: a printer and a scanner. They use much of the same hardware but talk to your computer through separate software paths. So when one works and the other does not, the trouble is almost always in the software or connection for the broken half — not the machine itself. Reinstalling the full software, rather than just one piece, is the fix that most often restores the missing function.

- An all-in-one is two machines in one; one half can fail while the other works.
- A one-sided failure points to that function's software or connection, not a dead machine.
- Reinstall the full driver and software package, not just the print or scan piece.
- The maker's app usually restores both halves more reliably than Windows or the Mac alone.

WATCH OUT

Because the machine clearly powers on and does half its job, you can stop worrying that it is broken — it almost never is. That narrows the hunt to the software and connection for the one function that stopped, which is a far smaller and friendlier problem.

2 Why One Half Fails and the Other Doesn't

Printing and scanning travel over different software channels even when they share one cable or one Wi-Fi link. Your computer has a “print” path and a separate “scan” path, each with its own small driver. If the scan driver gets damaged or removed — by an update, a cleanup tool, or a half-finished install — scanning stops while printing carries on, and the reverse happens just as easily.

This is why the split is such a useful clue. A power or hardware fault would usually take out the whole machine; a one-sided failure almost always means one software path needs rebuilding.

GOOD TO KNOW

Big computer updates — a new version of Windows or macOS — are a common trigger. They can quietly replace the simple built-in print driver while leaving the scan software behind, so printing survives and scanning disappears. Reinstalling the maker's full package puts the missing half back.

3 Restart the Machine and the Computer

As always, start with the simplest reset. A full restart of both the all-in-one and the computer clears temporary glitches and is worth doing before any reinstalling.

1. Turn the all-in-one off with its power button, unplug it for 30 seconds, and turn it back on.

2. Restart the computer so it rebuilds its connections with a clean slate.
3. Try the function that failed — scan or print — once everything is back up.
4. If only one half is still broken, move on to the software steps below.

4 If Printing Fails but Scanning Works

When the scanner is fine but nothing prints, you already know the machine, the cable, and the Wi-Fi are healthy — the scanner proves it. The trouble is on the print side.

1. Check the print queue and clear any stuck jobs (cancel everything in the list).
2. Make sure the right printer is selected and set as default, not a “PDF” or old printer.
3. Check ink or toner — a truly empty cartridge can stop printing while scanning carries on.
4. Remove the printer and add it back, or reinstall the maker's software so the print driver is rebuilt.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Scanning needs no ink at all, so a machine that scans perfectly but prints blank or nothing may simply be out of ink or have a clogged head — a print-side issue, not a connection one. Checking ink is a quick win here.

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5 If Scanning Fails but Printing Works

When you can print but not scan, the machine and its connection are clearly fine — printing proves it. The scan software or its path is what needs attention.

1. Try scanning from the maker's app rather than from Windows or the Mac's built-in tool, or the other way around.
2. On Windows, try the built-in “Windows Scan” app from the Microsoft Store.
3. On a Mac, try scanning from Printers & Scanners (select the device, then the Scan tab).
4. If none work, reinstall the maker's full software so the scan driver is restored.

> **TIP**
> There is often more than one way to scan — the maker's app, a built-in system tool, and sometimes a desktop program. If one will not scan, trying another is a quick way to tell whether the scanner itself is fine and only one piece of software is at fault.

6 Reinstall the Full Software, Not Just One Piece

The single most effective fix for a one-sided failure is to remove the machine's software completely and reinstall the maker's full package — the one that includes both print and scan. A partial install, or Windows' own basic driver, often covers printing but leaves scanning out.

1. Remove the device from Printers & scanners (Windows) or Printers & Scanners (Mac).
2. Install the maker's full app — HP Smart, Canon PRINT, Epson Smart Panel, or Brother Mobile Connect / iPrint&Scan.
3. Let it add the device and install both the print and scan components.
4. Test printing and scanning, one after the other.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Windows' own “add printer” often installs a basic print-only driver that does not include scanning. If you added the machine that way and scanning never worked, that is likely why — install the maker's full package to get the scan half.

7 Use the Maker's App for Both Functions

The brand apps are built to handle printing and scanning together, and they are usually the most reliable way to get a troublesome function working again.

- HP: HP Smart handles print, scan, and copy, and can scan straight to your phone or email.
- Canon: Canon PRINT covers printing and scanning from phone or computer.
- Epson: Epson Smart Panel manages print and scan and offers scan-to-cloud options.
- Brother: Brother Mobile Connect (or iPrint&Scan on older models) does both halves.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Scanning from your phone through the maker's app is often easier than scanning to a computer at all — the scan lands right on your phone as a photo or PDF you can email or save. If the computer's scan path is being stubborn, the phone app is a fine way around it.

8 Check Which Connection Each Half Uses

On some setups the printer and scanner can end up using different connections — one over Wi-Fi, one over USB — which leads to one working and the other not, depending on what is plugged in and awake.

1. Note whether the machine is connected by Wi-Fi, USB cable, or both.
2. If it is on Wi-Fi, confirm it and the computer share the same network.
3. If a USB cable is involved, make sure it is firmly seated at both ends.
4. Try the failing function over the other connection if available — USB scanning, for example, when Wi-Fi scanning fails.

9 When Scanning Works but Won't Reach Its Destination

Sometimes the scanner scans fine but the result never arrives — scan-to-email, scan-to-folder, or scan-to-computer fails at the last step. That is a destination problem, not a scanner one.

- Scan-to-email needs the printer set up with email details, which can lapse — reconfigure it in the maker's app.
- Scan-to-computer needs the computer awake and the maker's software running to receive it.
- Scan-to-folder needs the shared folder to still exist and permit access.
- Scanning to the maker's phone app or to a USB stick sidesteps these destination snags.

WATCH OUT

Scan-to-email and scan-to-folder setups quietly break when a password changes, a folder moves, or an email provider tightens its rules. Rebuilding those cleanly can be fiddly — a good thing to let me set up properly so it keeps working.

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10 Update the Firmware

Occasionally the machine's own built-in software — its firmware — needs updating to fix a bug that broke one function. The maker's app is the safe place to check and apply this.

1. Open the maker's app and look for a firmware or printer-update option.

2. If an update is offered, apply it while the machine stays powered and connected.
3. Let it finish fully — do not turn the machine off mid-update.
4. Test both printing and scanning afterward.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Never switch off or unplug a printer in the middle of a firmware update — an interrupted update can leave the machine unusable. Start it only when you can leave it undisturbed for a few minutes.

11 Try a USB Cable as a Test

Connecting the machine to the computer with a USB cable, at least as a test, removes Wi-Fi from the picture and tells you whether the failing function works over a direct link.

1. Plug a USB printer cable between the machine and the computer.
2. Let the computer recognize it and, if prompted, install the software.
3. Test the failing function over USB.
4. If it works over USB, the trouble is the Wi-Fi path for that function; if not, it is the software.

> **TIP**
> A USB test is a great divider: if the broken half suddenly works over USB, you know the machine is fine and the Wi-Fi side needs attention. That one test saves a lot of guessing.

12 When Copying Won't Work Either

Copying uses both halves at once — it scans a page and then prints it — so if copying fails, it helps to know which half is really at fault. Testing print and scan separately points you to the culprit.

1. Try a scan on its own and a print on its own to see which one fails.

2. If printing fails, copying will too — fix the print side (ink, queue, driver).
3. If scanning fails, copying will too — fix the scan side (software, destination).
4. If both work alone but copying does not, restart the machine and try the copy again.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Copying happens entirely inside the machine and does not need the computer at all, so a copy that fails while print and scan both work on their own usually just needs a restart of the machine itself.

13 Keep Both Halves Healthy

A few habits keep an all-in-one printing and scanning reliably.

- Install the maker's full app from the start, not just the basic system driver.
- Keep the app and the machine's firmware up to date.
- After a big computer update, test both printing and scanning and reinstall the app if one stops.
- Give the machine a fixed network address so it stays easy for both functions to reach.

14 When to Call Bill

Restoring a missing half of an all-in-one usually comes down to reinstalling the maker's full software — and this guide walks you through it. But damaged drivers, broken scan-to-email setups, and firmware updates can be nerve-racking to tackle alone, and a one-sided failure sometimes does point to a genuine hardware fault that is worth diagnosing properly.

I will work out whether it is software, connection, or hardware, rebuild whatever is missing — including scan-to-email or scan-to-folder setups that are fiddly to get right — and test both printing and scanning before I leave, so your all-in-one is whole again.

- Reinstalling the software has not brought the missing function back.
- Scan-to-email or scan-to-folder stopped working and you would rather it be set up right.
- You are nervous about a firmware update.
- You suspect the machine itself may have a genuine fault.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the all-in-one. A one-sided failure means software, not a dead machine.

I want to...	Do this...
Restart both	Power the machine off 30 seconds and on; restart the computer
Printing fails only	Clear the queue, check ink, confirm the right printer, reinstall software
Scanning fails only	Try another scan app; reinstall the maker's full package
Restore the missing half	Install the maker's FULL app, not Windows' basic driver
Scan won't arrive	Rebuild scan-to-email/folder, or scan to the phone app instead
Divide the problem	Test the broken half over a USB cable
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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