Windows XP Tips (Updated 26-Apr-03)

COM PORT IN USE   PREVENTING AUTOMATIC DRIVER INSTALLATION   DRIVER ROLLBACK

COM PORT IN USE: When a modem that creates a virtual COM port is installed, it will normally be assigned the next unused COM port. If the modem is removed, or if the installation is not completely successful, the COM port assigned with that installation may continue to be identified as 'in use' by Windows, even though it really isn't in use. Each subsequent modem installation removes another COM port from being available.
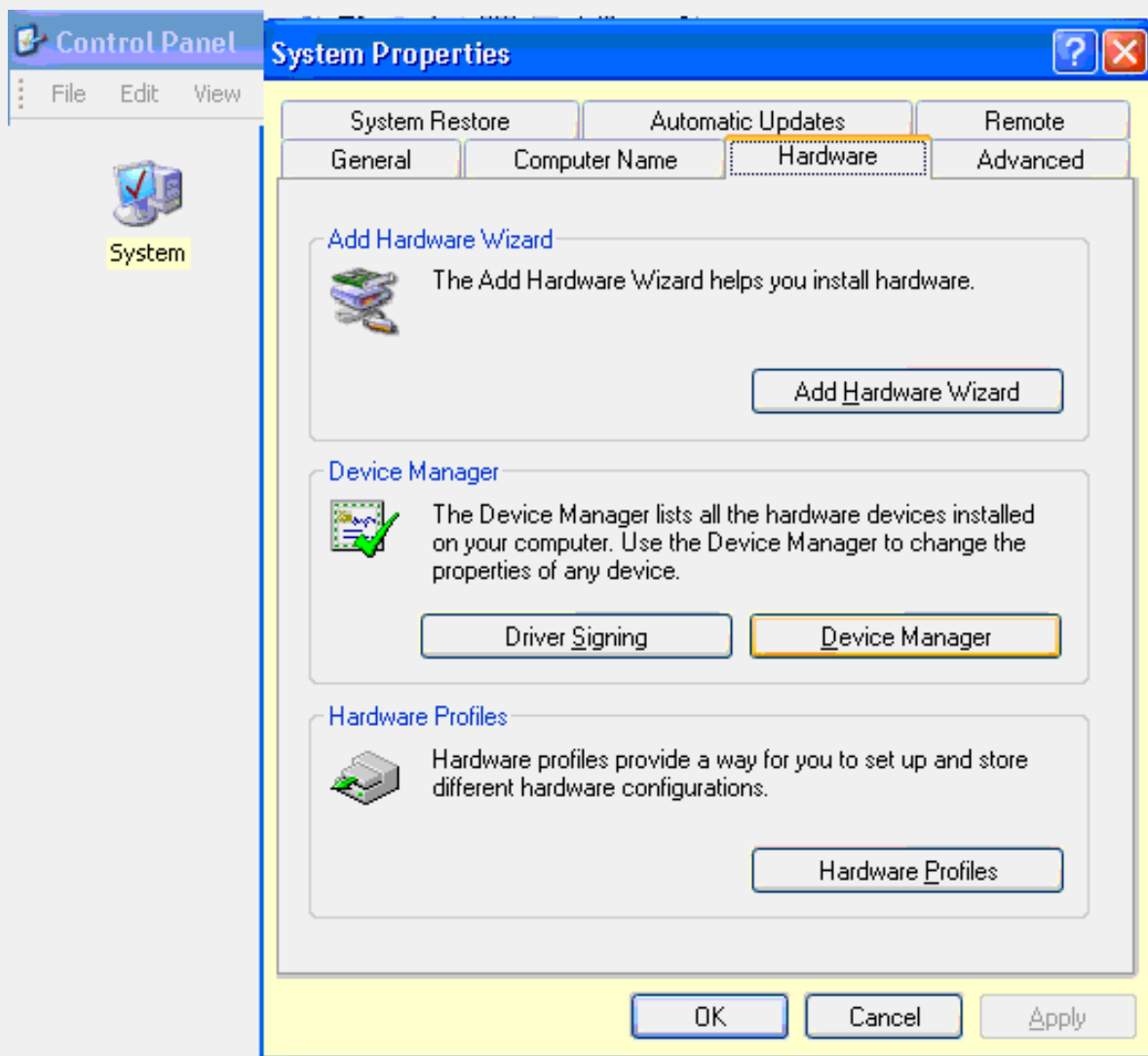
You can reclaim these 'used' COM ports that really are not in use:

Open the Device Manager by clicking on the button from
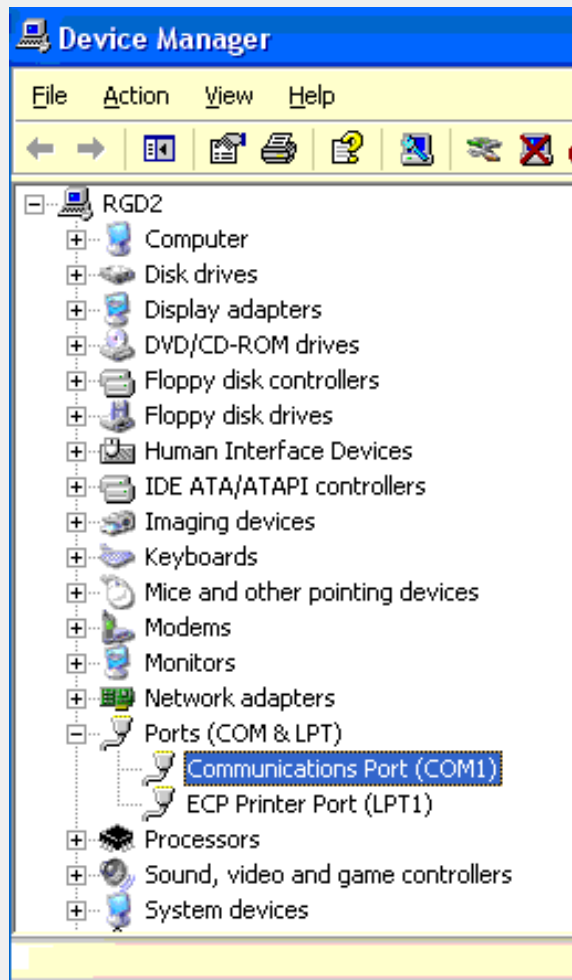
Control Panel

System

Hardware tab

Expand the

Ports

listing, and

double-click your
COMMUNICATIONS PORT (normally COM1)

Device Manager

File   Action   View   Help

RGD2
- Computer
- Disk drives
- Display adapters
- DVD/CD-ROM drives
- Floppy disk controllers
- Floppy disk drives
- Human Interface Devices
- IDE ATA/ATAPI controllers
- Imaging devices
- Keyboards
- Mice and other pointing devices
- Modems
- Monitors
- Network adapters
- Ports (COM & LPT)
  - Communications Port (COM1)
  - ECP Printer Port (LPT1)
- Processors
- Sound, video and game controllers
- System devices

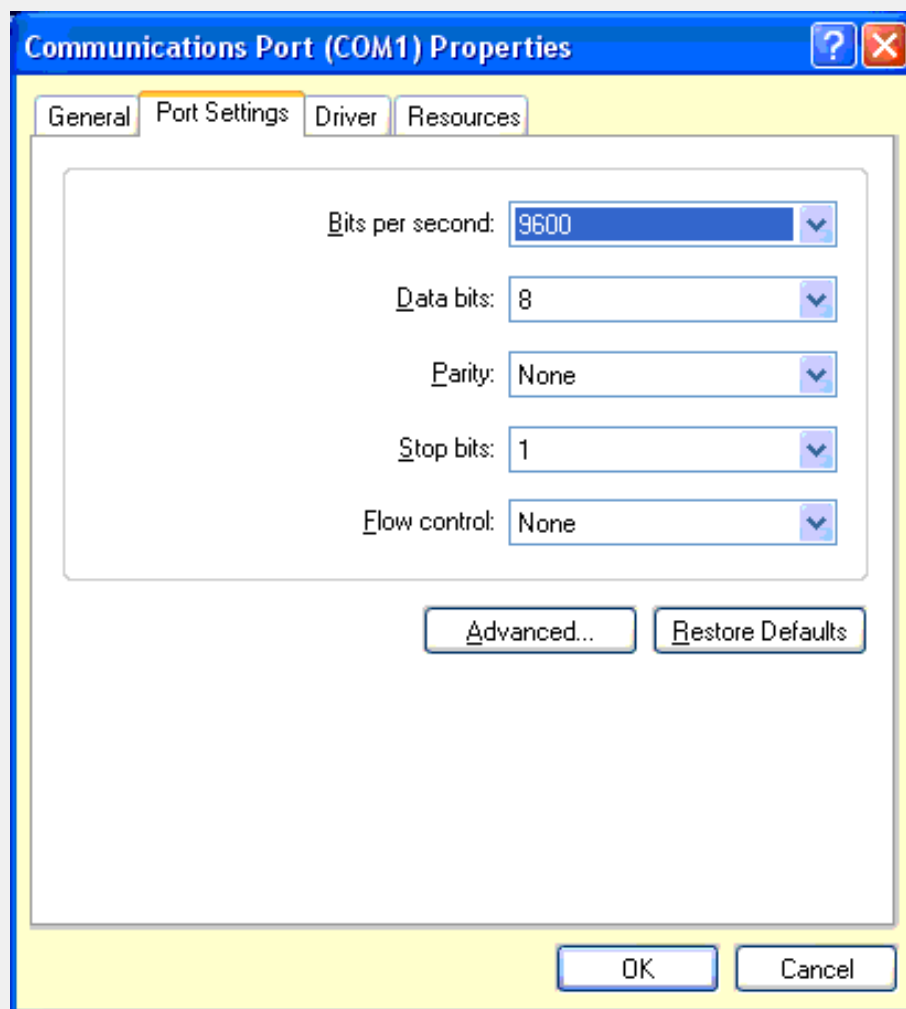Click on the

Port Settings

tab,
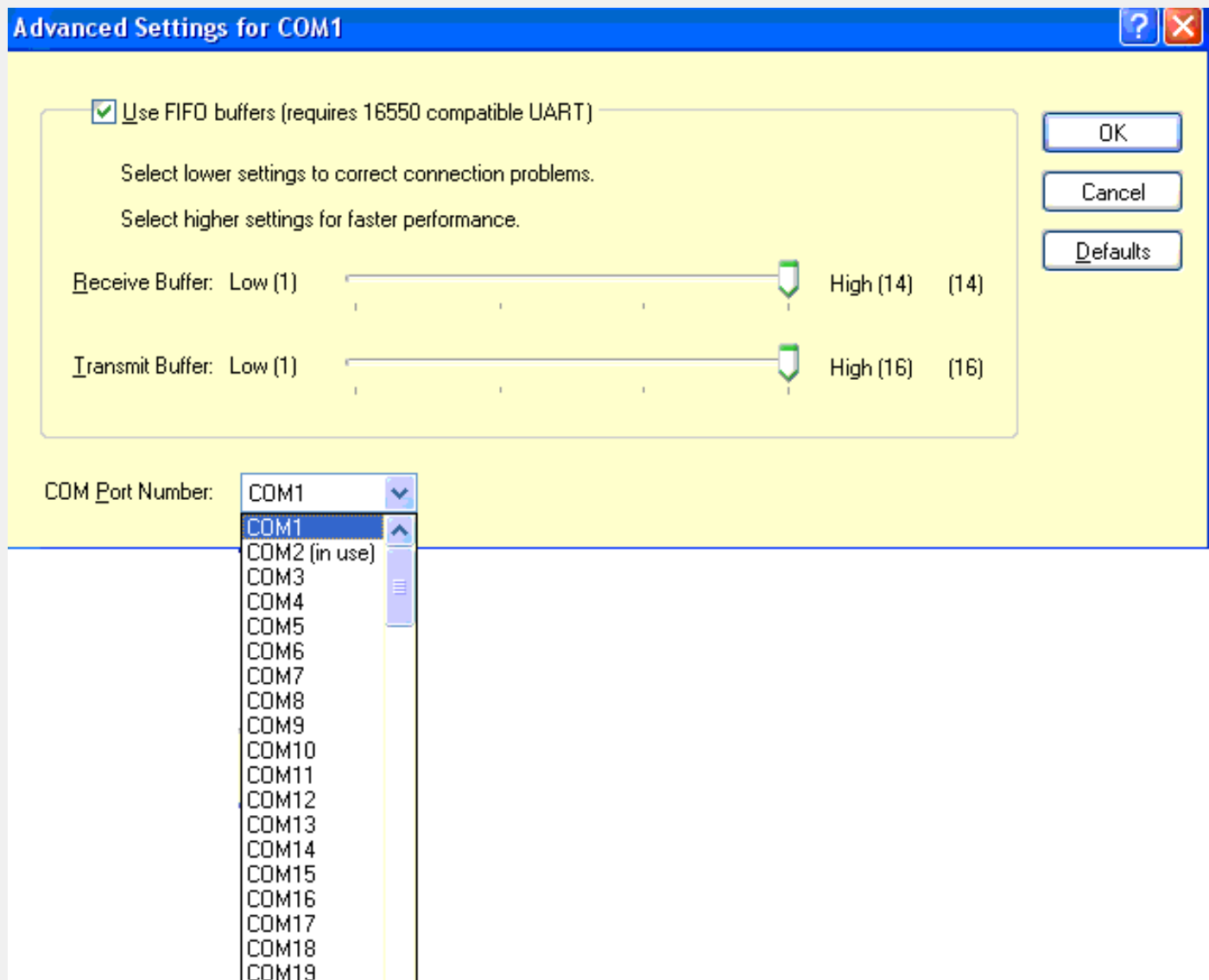
Then, Click the

Advanced...
button

Then, select the
COM Port Number
dropdown (screenshot
below), and change it a
COM port that shows
'In Use' that really isn't
in use.

Click OK, and continue
past warning about
using a used port.

Repeat for each false in
use port.

Then, repeat and change the port back to original (COM1) setting.

Communications Port (COM1) Properties

General | Port Settings | Driver | Resources

Bits per second: 9600

Data bits: 8

Parity: None

Stop bits: 1

Flow control: None

Advanced... | Restore Defaults

OK | Cancel

Advanced Settings for COM1

☑ Use FIFO buffers (requires 16550 compatible UART)

Select lower settings to correct connection problems.

Select higher settings for faster performance.

Receive Buffer: Low (1) —————————————————— High (14)   (14)

Transmit Buffer: Low (1) —————————————————— High (16)   (16)

COM Port Number: COM1

COM1
COM2 (in use)
COM3
COM4
COM5
COM6
COM7
COM8
COM9
COM10
COM11
COM12
COM13
COM14
COM15
COM16
COM17
COM18
COM19

OK

Cancel

Defaults

Preventing automatic driver installation: Windows XP comes with (usually outdated) modem drivers for most of the major modem chipsets. Sometimes, the driver will not install successfully, and sometimes, installing the correct, updated driver is difficult as XP may automatically "protect" the original driver - replacing your update with the old one.

Windows automatic hardware identification and installation depends upon files in the hidden folder **\windows\inf**

You can use Explorer and XP's Search function to locate these files. Files that begin with **OEM....** are .inf files not included with XP. Remove any modem-related OEM*.inf files from this folder. (Recommended: **Move** the files to a backup folder.) This will prevent installation based upon any drivers not provided by Microsoft.

All Microsoft-provided modem installation files begin with **MDM...** Removing (again, **Move** to a backup folder is recommended) all files beginning with **MDM...** will prevent automatic installation of any modem; removing the **MDM...** file that identifies your modem's **PCI ID** will prevent your modem from being automatically installed.

Driver Rollback - If your modem was working, but stops working properly after you update the

driver, you can use Windows' Driver Rollback to return to the previous driver.

Go to the Device Manager (first screenshot/sequence listed on this page);
Expand the **Modems** listing (second screenshot on this page)
and double-click your modem listing.

On the Modem Properties box that appears, click the **Driver** tab. (See first screenshot on XP Device Manager page.)

Then, click the Roll Back Driver button.