

USBprog

User's Manual

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Contents

1	Overview	3
1.1	The USBprog Hardware	3
1.2	The USBprog Software	3
1.3	About this Document	4
1.4	Terms and Definitions	4
1.5	Getting Support	4
2	Getting Started with the Hardware	5
2.1	Connectors, Jumpers and LEDs	5
2.1.1	Connectors	5
2.1.2	Jumpers	6
2.1.3	LEDs	6
2.2	Initialise the Hardware	7
2.2.1	Check if the Bootloader is Installed	7
2.2.2	Flashing the Bootloader	7
2.3	Upload the First Firmware	9
3	Getting Started with the Software	11
3.1	Installation	11
3.1.1	Binary Packages for Linux	11
3.1.2	Windows	13
3.1.3	MacOS	17
3.1.4	Compiling USBprog from Source	17
3.2	The Update Mode	21
3.2.1	How USB Works	21
3.2.2	Switching to the Update Mode	22
	Bibliography	23

1 Overview

1.1 The USBprog Hardware

If you read this document, you have probably already an USBprog device. In the past, every microcontroller has its own programming hardware that is mostly relatively expensive. If you work with multiple microcontroller environments, you end up with plenty of programmers on your desk that are not only expensive but also waste space.

On the other side, most self-built programming hardware (for example several ISP programmers for the Atmel AVR controllers) was for the parallel port. However, modern PCs have no parallel port. While you can extend a PC with a parallel port PCI card, you're lost on notebooks. Building and programming USB hardware is not really difficult but still more work than for the parallel port.

The most important thing is the firmware. Once programmed with a so-called *bootloader* the firmware can be exchanged. While it's necessary to have an ISP programming device¹ once to program the USBprog, a normal PC or Mac with the *USBprog software* is sufficient to change the firmware. So it takes only a few seconds to make a JTAG device from an Atmel MTK II clone, for example.

Warning: This document only describes the USBprog hardware in version 3.0. If you still have an USBprog 2.0 device, please refer to the online documentation! If you are unsure, look at picture [2.1 on page 5](#).

1.2 The USBprog Software

As already mentioned in the section above, you need a special PC software to exchange the firmware of the USBprog. This software is available as both GUI and command line version that can be also used in scripts and Makefiles. For following systems are supported:

- Microsoft Windows 2000, XP, Vista and 7
- Linux (tested on openSUSE and Ubuntu)
- MacOS X (tested on 10.5)

¹That can be a second, already initialised USBprog or another ISP programmer.

1.3 About this Document

This documentation should be both: A guide to get started for people that just bought the hardware and want to install the software and use the hardware and also a reference documentation for both the software and the most common firmwares.

If you have any suggestions how to improve the software and the documentation or if you just find problems, please don't hesitate to contact the author via e-mail at bernhard@bwalle.de. However, I probably cannot help with hardware or firmware problems. See section 1.5 in that case.

1.4 Terms and Definitions

At first we introduce the term *firmware* and *bootloader* as we use it in the rest of the document.

Firmware The main advantage of the USBprog device is that the firmware can be exchanged.

The firmware is the program which is loaded into the flash memory of the USBprog device and which is used to perform a specific task: Programming AVR microcontrollers, emulating a JTAG debugger and so on.

Bootloader While the main firmware is exchanged with the computer program, the flash contains also a part (at the highest possible location) that can load the other firmware part. This part is—in the ideal world—only loaded once into the USBprog flash and then never gets overwritten.

1.5 Getting Support

If you have problems with the document here, there are several places where you can get support:

1. There's a web-based forum at <http://forum.embedded-projects.net> which is quite well-visited. Also the guy who has developed USBprog, Benedikt Sauter, reads that forum regularly.
2. Additionally, there's also a mailing list at Berlios (usbprog-pub@lists.berlios.de). You can subscribe, unsubscribe or read the archive at <https://lists.berlios.de/pipermail/usbprog-pub/>.
3. For general questions about microcontroller programming, <http://www.mikrocontroller.net> is always worth looking at. There are also plenty of USBprog users out there.
4. Especially for problems with the USBprog software, you can also send me an email directly at bernhard@bwalle.de.

2 Getting Started with the Hardware

2.1 Connectors, Jumpers and LEDs

At first we have to introduce the jumpers, connectors and LEDs which we talk about in the next sections. All figures in that document are meant to be drawn in the same perspective (USB connector on the right) as figure 2.1.

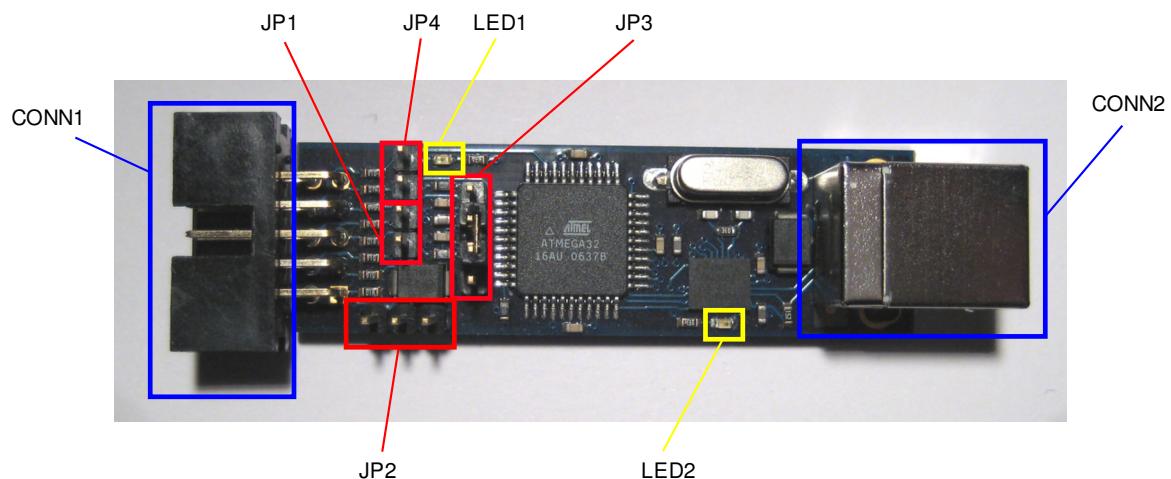


Figure 2.1: The USBprog device (version 3.0) with all connectors, jumpers and LEDs

2.1.1 Connectors

CONN1 is the output interface which is used to do something useful with the USBprog beside from blinking LEDs. For example if you use the *avrispmk2* firmware, this is an ISP interface which is used to program microcontrollers.

CONN2 is obviously the USB connector which is used to connect your USBprog to the computer. You have to use a *Type B* cable which is the normal cable to connect USB devices—apart from micro or mini USB.

2.1.2 Jumpers

JP1 (the lower two of the four pins) is the jumper that must be connected if the bootloader of the USBprog should be updated. See also section [2.2 on the next page](#) how to flash the bootloader.

JP2 controls how the power supply of the circuit that should be programmed (connected to CONN1). Figure [2.2](#) shows the possible connections:

The default is no power supply for the programmed circuit. In that case you must ensure that the device is supplied with power by other means. This is the safest possibility.

If you connect the two leftmost pins, that means that the 5 V VCC is directly from the USB port. This setting is dangerous because an error (short-circuit) in your circuit can damage the computer.

An alternative is the setting of the two leftmost pins: In that case, the 5 V VCC is not directly from the USB port but with a Schottky diode. This is safer than the direct connection.

JP3 has two functions: At first it can be used as 5 V serial interface for debugging. You cannot directly connect this jumper to the computer but you need some level converter in between¹. This functionality is only needed by firmware developers.

More important is another function which is used by the bootloader at startup. To put the device in update mode, disconnect the device, then connect pins 2 and 3 as shown in figure [2.3 on the next page](#) and connect the device again.

JP4 is application specific, i. e. used directly by the firmware that is flashed into the USBprog. Currently, JP4 is not used by any of the public firmwares.



Figure 2.2: Possible connections of JP2

2.1.3 LEDs

LED1 (red) is used by the firmware. There are two common scenarios:

If the USBprog is in *update mode*, the LED blinks slowly. In the wide-spread Atmel MTK II clone firmware, this LED shines while the programming of the microcontroller is ongoing.

LED2 (green) is just the Power LED.

¹If you want to build such a level converter yourself, look for example at <http://www.nslu2-linux.org/wiki/HowTo/AddASerialPort>. If you want to buy such a cable in Germany, the [Embedded Project Shop](#) also has one. Look for "FTDI-Kabel TTL-232R USB zu TTL serielle Kabel (5.0 V)".

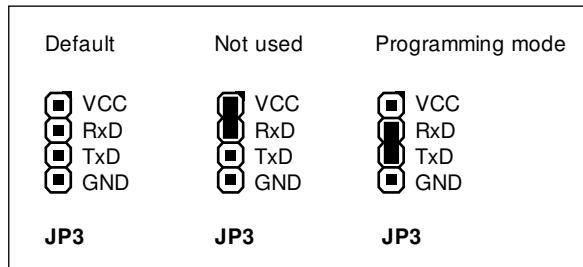


Figure 2.3: Possible connections of JP3

2.2 Initialise the Hardware

This section describes how to install the bootloader. If you bought a version of USBprog which already contains the bootloader, you can safely skip that step. If you don't know if you have a version with bootloader, please read section [2.2.1](#).

2.2.1 Check if the Bootloader is Installed

To check if the device already contains a bootloader, just put the device into programming mode manually. For this step, you don't require any specific PC software. You just need a working USB port.

1. Disconnect your USBprog from the computer if it's connected.
2. Close the jumper JP1 as described in section [2.1.2](#) on the previous page.
3. Connect the USBprog to a USB port.

If LED1 (see figure [2.1 on page 5](#)) now blinks, everything is fine. If not, there's no working bootloader and you need to flash it.

2.2.2 Flashing the Bootloader

When buying a USBprog at the [Embedded Projects Webshop](#) you can choose between a slightly cheaper version without an already flashed bootloader and a slightly more expensive version that already has flashed the bootloader.

Flashing the bootloader is the only step where you need a second programming device. It's possible to use an already initialised USBprog with the "AVRISP mk2 Clone" firmware flashed. Any other programmer for Atmel AVR microcontrollers will do it, too. You need the standardised *ISP* interface.

We need not only a programmer but also a programming software. While there are plenty of programmers for Atmel AVR microcontrollers, we use [AVRdude](#) because it supports quite a lot of hardware devices and it's available on basically any platform that is around there. On Windows, we suggest to use [WinAVR](#) which is quite easy to install.

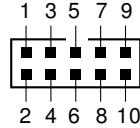


Figure 2.4: Pin numbering used in the ISP pin assignment

Setting the Jumpers

To program the microcontroller that is on the USBprog board, you have to connect jumper JP1 as described in section [2.1.2 on page 6](#).

There are two possibilities how the programmer gets its power:

1. The programmer has its own power supply. That is the case for every USB-based programmer since USB can supply the device with up to 500 mA.
2. The programmer takes the power from the circuit that should be programmed. That is the case for most “self-made” parallel port programmers since the parallel port is not able to supply devices with power.

If you have a device of the second category, you have to set the jumper JP2 as described in section [2.1.2 on page 6](#) and shown in figure 2.3 on the previous page. We suggest the 3rd method with the Schottky diode.

Wiring

After the jumpers are right, connect the USBprog with a free USB port of your computer which is necessary to supply the USBprog with power. The green power LED (LED1, see section [2.1.3 on page 6](#)) indicates that everything is okay. If necessary connect your programmer with power and with your computer.

For the connection between your programmer and your computer you need a 10-pole ribbon cable. The pin assignment is the standardised ISP interface as shown in table 2.1. The numbering scheme is shown in figure 2.4.

Pin	Description	Pin	Description
1	MOSI (data out)	2	VCC (+5 V)
3	–	4	GND (signal ground)
5	RESET	6	"
7	SCK (clock)	8	"
9	MISO (instruction in)	10	"

Table 2.1: ISP Pin Assignment

Flashing the Firmware

Now it's time to flash the firmware with AVRdude. At first you have to find out how your programmer is named in AVRdude which is listed in [1] where the -c option is described. This symbolic name is spelled as PROGRAMMER in the commands below.

At first you have to download the firmware file at http://svn.berlios.de/svnroot/repos/usbprog/trunk/usbprog_base/firmware/usbprog_base.hex. Save the file as `usbprog_base.hex`.

Now flash the firmware with the command

```
% avrdude -p m32 -c PROGRAMMER -U flash:w:usbprog_base.hex
```

The second step requires to set the fuse bits with following interactive AVRdude session:

```
% avrdude -p m32 -c PROGRAMMER -t  
avrdude> write lfuse 0 Oxe0  
avrdude> write hfuse 0 Oxd8  
avrdude> quit
```

After everything was successful, disconnect the USBprog, remove the jumper JP1 and connect the USBprog again. The red LED blinks now. This is a sign that you're ready to upload a firmware which is described in section 2.3—just the next section!

2.3 Upload the First Firmware

Well, in theory that's not the correct order because you need to install the software first which is described in section 3.1 on page 11. But maybe you're more a software guy and the software installation already succeeded, so you're ready to execute that step before looking into detail of the software. If not, read section 3.1 on page 11 and come back.

Note: If you're using Windows, we strongly suggest that you read the installation section first because the driver installation is more complicated. On Unix, no driver installation is necessary since USB devices can be driven by userspace programs there.

We describe the command line interface here as “first step” for a simple reason: It's exactly the same on every platforms and a command can be reproduced by the user more easily than finding GUI elements.

So open a shell on Unix (Linux/MacOS) or open the *USBprog Command Line* in the “Start” menu on Windows. You should see a prompt that looks like

```
(usbprog) _
```

Note: On Linux, we suggest to run that first test as `root` user. So switch to `root` using the `su` command on Fedora/openSUSE or execute the command using `sudo` on Ubuntu. The installation section will show how to configure your system to avoid that in future.

Before you connect the USBprog, you should manually switch to update mode by inserting jumper JP3 like shown in figure 2.3 on page 7 as “Programming mode”. After you connected the USBprog

to the USB port of your computer, wait a few seconds to make sure that the operating system detected the device².

Now the `devices` command should display a single USBprog device:

```
(usbprog) devices
[ 0] * Bus 003 Device 002: 1781:c620
    usbprog: USBprog in update mode
```

Since it's the only device and since the device is already in *update mode*, the star (*) after the number shows you that this device is already selected. So you can proceed and upload the `blinkdemo` firmware. That firmware does nothing but blinking the LED. Blinking the LED you ask? It's already blinking! Well, the sequence is different, so it should be easily possible to distinguish the `blinkdemo` blinking from the update mode blinking.

Enough talking. Let's now upload the firmware:

```
(usbprog) upload blinkdemo
Opening device ...
Writing firmware ...
#####
Starting device ...
Detecting new USB devices ...
```

Okay, that's it. Because you want to use the firmware now, remove the JP3 jumper so that the firmware starts after next reconnect instead of putting the USBprog in update mode.

²On Linux, you can watch that by reading the system log in `/var/log/syslog` or `/var/log/messages` or repeatedly executing the `dmesg` command.

3 Getting Started with the Software

3.1 Installation

3.1.1 Binary Packages for Linux

This section describes the installation of binary packages on wide-spread Linux distributions. If you have a more exotic Linux distribution, another Unix flavour or if you just want to use the latest and greatest version, proceed by reading section [3.1.4 on page 17](#).

In any case: After the installation has finished, the program can be started using `usbprog` in a shell for the command line version of the USBprog software and `usbprog-gui` for the graphical user interface (if installed). In the last case, USBprog should also appear in the start menu of your desktop environment¹, at least after logging out and logging in again.

Ubuntu/Debian

That's the easiest distribution because Uwe Herrman (uwe@debian.org) was so kind to provide Debian packages. Because everything that is in Debian is also in *Universe*, you also have that advantage on Ubuntu.

So: Just open a Terminal and install USBprog by entering

```
% sudo aptitude install usbprog
```

If you also want to use the graphical interface of the USBprog software, use

```
% sudo aptitude install usbprog usbprog-gui
```

The only “disadvantage” of installing the GUI is that it probably will install some dependencies like `wxGtk`.

If you want to access the USBprog as user, that user has to be put in the `plugdev` group. To do so, just execute (replace `@@USERNAME@@` with the username that you want to put into that group):

```
% sudo usermod -aG plugdev @@USERNAME@@
```

¹At least if you use KDE, GNOME or Xfce.

openSUSE and SLES

There are binary packages in the [openSUSE Build Service](#), directly from the author. So they should be always up to date. They are in the *electronics* repository. To add the repository to your package list, open a shell and then enter

```
% sudo zypper ar -r http://repos.opensuse.org/electronics/@@DIST@@/electronics.repo
```

The term @@DIST@@ has to be substituted version of your openSUSE or SLES as shown in table 3.1.

String	Distribution
openSUSE_11.0	openSUSE 11.0
openSUSE_11.1	openSUSE 11.1
openSUSE_11.2	openSUSE 11.2
SUSE_Linux_Factory	openSUSE Factory (the unstable development version)
SLE_10	SUSE Linux Enterprise (Desktop/Server) 10
SLE_11	SUSE Linux Enterprise (Desktop/Server) 11

Table 3.1: SUSE Distribution strings for the *electronics* Build Service repository

After that, refresh the package list with

```
% sudo zypper ref
```

You're now ready to install USBprog:

```
% sudo zypper install usbprog usbprog-gui
```

If you don't need the graphical user interface, just omit the `usbprog-gui` package. Of course, since the repository is now known by the package manager, you can also install or uninstall the USBprog packages using YaST.

If you want to access the USBprog as user, that user has to be put in the `uucp` group. Just use YaST to perform that task. See also `/usr/share/doc/packages/usbprog/README.SUSE`.

Fedora, CentOS and RHEL

You may be surprised, but the binary packages for Fedora, Red Hat and CentOS are also built in the [openSUSE Build Service](#). The only difference of that section compared with the previous section is that we describe `yum` instead of `zypper` here.

There's no command so add a repository in `yum`. Instead, you have to change to the directory `/etc/yum.repos.d` and download the repository file. In that case, you have to substitute @@DIST@@ with values of table 3.2 on the next page.

```
% su
# cd /etc/yum.repos.d
# wget http://repos.opensuse.org/electronics/@@DIST@@/electronics.repo
```

String	Distribution
Fedora_11	Fedora 11
Fedora_12	Fedora 12
CentOS_5	CentOS 5
RHEL_5	Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5

Table 3.2: Distribution strings for Red Hat-like distributions in the Build Service

Since the refresh is done automatically by `yum`, just install the package(s) with

```
# yum install usbprog usbprog-gui
```

As with SUSE and Ubuntu, you can omit the `usbprog-gui` package if you don't plan to use the graphical user interface.

If you want to access the USBprog as user, that user has to be put in the `uucp` group on RHEL/CentOS 5 or in the `dialout` group on recent Fedora versions. Just execute

```
% sudo usermod -aG uucp @@USERNAME@@      # RHEL 5, CentOS 5
% sudo usermod -aG dialout @@USERNAME@@    # Fedora > 10
```

where `@@USERNAME@@` has to be replaced with the login of the user that should be in that group. See also `/usr/share/doc/usbprog/README.{CentOS,Fedora,RedHat}`.

3.1.2 Windows

Supported Systems

This section describes the installation of USBprog on Windows. Although binary packages are provided, the installation is not trivial since we need to install a device driver—unlikely the other operating systems that are able to handle USB devices in userspace without driver installation.

At first, make sure that you're running one of following operating systems:

- Windows 2000 with SP4
- Windows XP with SP3 (32 bit only)
- Windows Vista with SP1 (32 bit or 64 bit)²
- Windows 7 (32 bit or 64 bit)

Although the installation package is prepared to run on a 64 bit Windows, I was not able to test it. If you are successfully able to use it, please drop me a [note](#).

²I was not able to test Windows Vista since I don't have it. The problem that prevented other USB devices from working after the installation of the USBprog software should be resolved at Windows 7 also was affected and Windows 7 works now.

Getting the Software

Note: Please install the software *before* attaching the hardware the first time. That makes it easier for you. If you already attached the hardware, abort the driver installation process.

You can download the latest Windows installer package at following site:

► http://developer.berlios.de/project/showfiles.php?group_id=7642

There's only one installer package for both 32 and 64 bit Windows. While the userspace program is always 32 bit, the driver is available as 32 bit and 64 bit version. Windows (like Linux) can handle 32 bit software on x86-64³, but drivers have to be 64 bit.

Installation of the Software

Installation of the *userspace software* (that excludes the driver part) is as easy as installing any other Windows program. Just start the installer with a double click, confirm the license, confirm the installation path and you're done.

To start the graphical user interface, select “Start” → “USBprog” → “USBprog GUI”. The command line interface has the name “USBprog Commandline”.

To uninstall the software, just use the “Uninstall” entry in the start menu or go to “Control Panel” → “Software”.

Driver Installation on Windows 2000 and XP

After you downloaded the software, the driver is located at `c:\Program Files\USBprog\driver` on an English Windows. Replace the “Program Files” with something locale-specific like “Programme” in a German Windows installation.

To install the driver, perform these steps. We assume that you successfully installed the bootloader on the device as described in section [2.2 on page 7](#).

1. Insert jumper JP1 (see section [2.1.2 on page 6](#)) to put the device into programming mode after power up.
2. Connect the device.
3. After a few seconds, the “New Hardware Wizard” should appear.
4. Don't connect with *Windows Update*—you don't find a driver for the USBprog there.
5. Choose “Install from a list or specific location (Advanced)”.
6. Select “Search for the best driver in these locations” and tick “Include this location in the search”.

³also known as “x64” or “amd64”

7. Choose “Browse” and select the driver directory mentioned above
(c:\Program Files\USBprog\driver).

That's it. Figure 3.1 on the following page shows screenshots of the dialogs (German only). To test your installation, fire up the USBprog software. In the command line mode, devices should list exactly one USBprog device and in GUI mode, the combo box should have also an entry.

Driver Installation on Windows Vista and 7

The following procedure describes only Windows 7, but Windows Vista should be similar. To install the driver, perform these steps. We assume that you successfully installed the bootloader on the device as described in section 2.2 on page 7.

Note: If you have a 64 bit version of Windows Vista or 7, you cannot install unsigned device drivers by default. However, there's a software called [Driver Signature Enforcement Overrider](#) that should solve that problem. Use the software at own risk—sorry!

Okay, let's start: At first you need to insert jumper JP1 (see section 2.1.2 on page 6) to put the device into programming mode after power up. Then connect the device. Now Windows looks for a matching driver and doesn't find one. This procedure takes about one minute⁴ and then the dialog shown in figure 3.2 on page 17 appears.

So we have to install the driver manually:

1. Open the “Device Manager”. You find it in “Control Panel” → “Hardware and Sound” → “Devices and Printers” → “Device Manager”.
2. The device “usbprogBase Mode” should appear there with a little warning sign as shown in figure 3.3 on page 18 in the first picture. Select “Update driver”.
3. Windows asks you where you want to search for the driver (figure 3.3 on page 18, second picture). Choose to manually specify the location and select c:\Program Files\USBprog\driver then.
4. A red warning that the driver is not signed appears (figure 3.3 on page 18, third picture). Confirm the driver installation!

That's it. To test your installation, fire up the USBprog software. In the command line mode, devices should list exactly one USBprog device and in GUI mode, the combo box should have also an entry.

⁴at least in my installation in VirtualBox, maybe a native Windows is much faster



Figure 3.1: Installation workflow on Windows XP (German only)

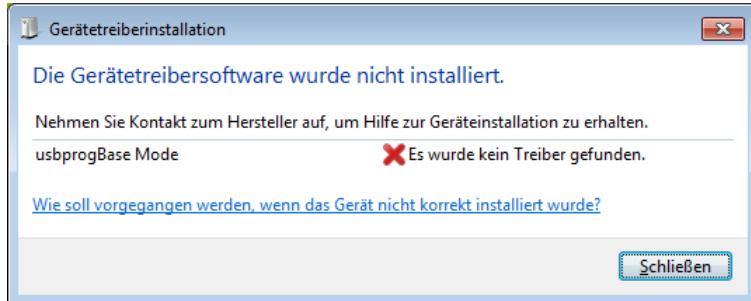


Figure 3.2: No driver has been found (German only)

3.1.3 MacOS

Porting Unix software to the Mac is easy, but developing cross-platform software that feels really MacOS-like is hard—especially if you are software developer and not designer. Therefore, we don't provide a software package for the Mac. But nevertheless: It's easy to install the USBprog software on the Mac.

You can compile USBprog directly from the source as described in section 3.1.4. However, it's more easy if you use *MacPorts*. Just install MacPorts on your computer as described in [2].

After that, open a Terminal and execute

```
% sudo port install usbprog
```

After that, you can start the command line tool with `usbprog` in a shell and the GUI with `usbprog-gui`.

3.1.4 Compiling USBprog from Source

Operating Systems

This section describes how to build USBprog from source. Sometimes there are valid reasons that even “normal” users (and not developers) wish to compile the program from the source code:

- a newer version is available that fixes a bug but the distribution package is too old;
- a more “exotic” Linux distribution is used for which no binary packages are available;
- even another operating system (not Linux or MacOS) is used.

Therefore, that section describes how to compile USBprog on Unix (which includes MacOS). Compiling it on Windows is completely different. Since there is always a binary setup package is available on that platform, the reasons mentioned above don't apply here. If you want to compile USBprog on Windows, refer to the file `win32/README` in the USBprog source distribution.

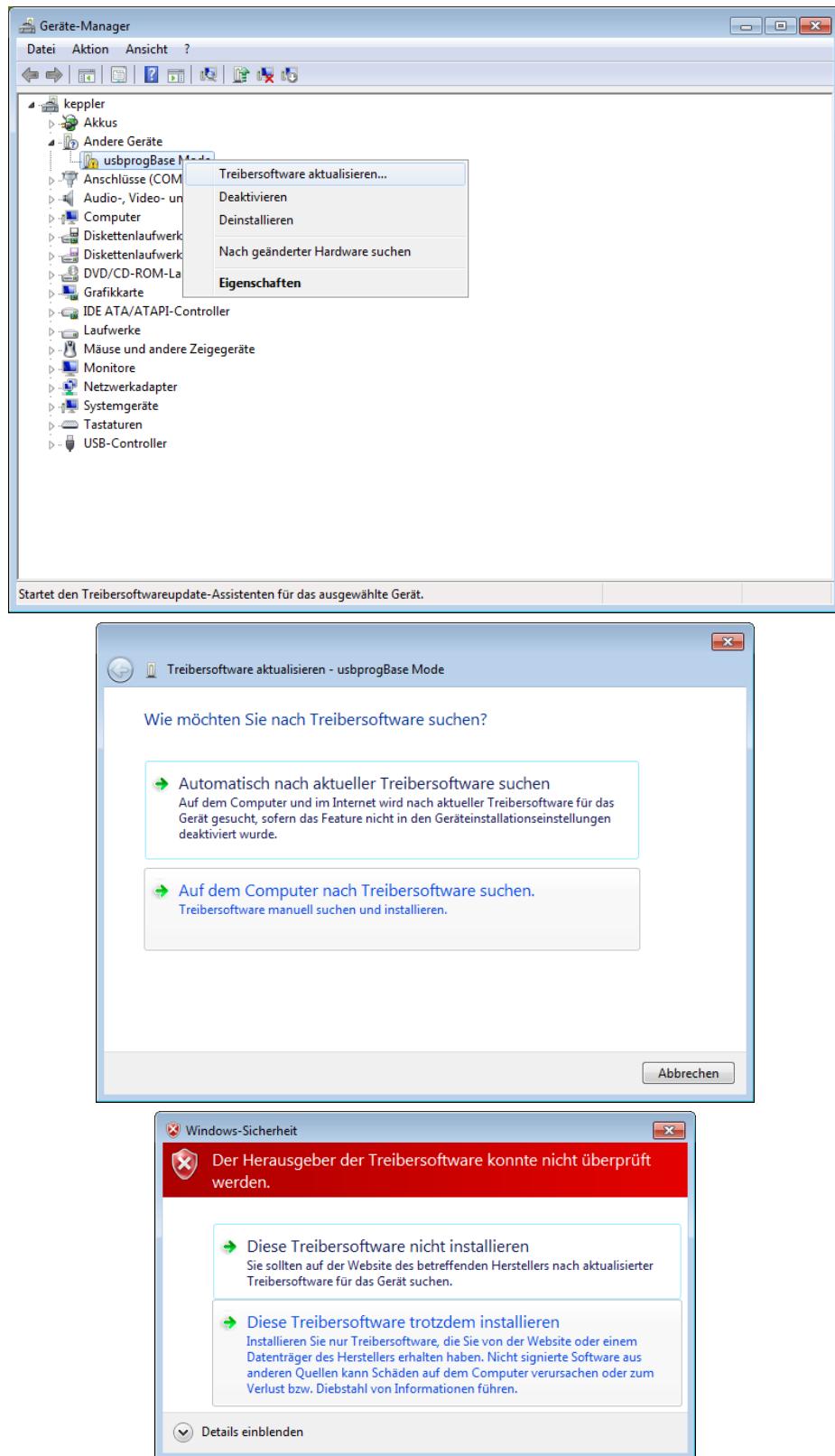


Figure 3.3: Manual driver installation on Windows (German only)

Dependencies

When compiling software from source, care must be taken to ensure that all dependencies are installed on the computer. The USBprog software needs following other software components. If you use distribution packages to install these dependencies, ensure that the header files (usually in a subpackage -dev⁵ or -devel⁶) are installed, too.

- a working C++ compiler like g++;
- Perl (<http://www.perl.org>) to build the manual pages from the POD sources;
- libusb (<http://www.libusb.org>);
- libxml (<http://www.xmlsoft.org>);
- libcurl (<http://curl.haxx.se>);
- GNU Readline (<http://tiswww.case.edu/php/chet/readline/rltop.html>) only if you want to use command-line completion with TAB;
- wxWidgets (<http://www.wxwidgets.org>) only if you want to build a graphical user interface.

Download, Build and Install

After everything is fine, download the source tarball from following source:

⇒ http://developer.berlios.de/project/showfiles.php?group_id=7642

You should have a file called `usbprog-@@VERSION@@.tar.bz2` on the disk where @@VERSION@@ represents the version of the program. At first, extract that tarball and change into the newly created directory afterwards:

```
% tar xvfj usbprog-@@VERSION@@.tar.bz2  
% cd usbprog-@@VERSION@@/
```

Now configure the software using

```
% ./configure
```

Lots of text messages appear. If the last lines look like

```
-----  
Build summary  
-----  
Readline      : enabled  
GUI (wxWidgets) : enabled  
-----
```

⁵on Debian/Ubuntu

⁶on RPM-based distributions like Red Hat or SUSE

everything is fine. Of course “disabled” is also okay, but then the specific feature is missing!

Build and install the software with

```
% make  
% sudo make install # or su -c "make install"
```

You can now start the software with `usbprog` (the CLI variant) or `usbprog-gui` (the graphical user interface, if built) and should also find it in the menu of your desktop environment. Also, a manual page should be available, both `usbprog(1)` and `usbprog-gui(1)`.

Hardware Access for Normal Users

Note: This applies only to Linux. For other operating systems please refer to the documentation of the system vendor or simply stick to `root`.

By default, only the `root` user has “raw” access to USB devices. Since it’s not desirable to start `USBprog`—especially the graphical user interface—always as `root`, we have to change system configuration in a way that it allows non-root users the access to the device.

Whenever a new device is detected on the system, the kernel asks a superspace deamon called `udev` to create a new device node below `/dev`. For USB devices, the raw device file (that gets accessed by `libusb` applications like `USBprog`) is below `/dev/bus/usb`. The permission of that device file determines which user has access to that device file.

A simple solution is now to create a `udev rule` that gives that device file not `root:root` but `root:@@GROUP@@` with write permission for that group. All users that should be allowed to use `USBprog` can not be put in `@@GROUP@@`.

A template for that `udev rule` is distributed with the `USBprog` source distribution called `usbprog.rules.in`. Replace the term `@@USBPROG_GROUP@@` with the name of the group you want to use⁷ and copy the file in `/etc/udev/rules.d`. Since the lexicographic order in that directory determines the priority (processing order) of rules, it’s quite common to prefix it with a number. Example:

```
% sed -e 's/@@USBPROG_GROUP@@/plugdev/g' usbprog.rules.in \  
> /etc/udev/rules.d/98-usbprog.rules
```

Of course “modern” Linux distributions (especially Red Hat and SUSE flavours) offer more complicate solutions to give the current “desktop” user more permission to the devices. However, that solutions are not standardised, tend do change every year and sometimes even are poorly documented. Therefore, we don’t describe that here. For the average user, this group-based solution is sufficient.

However: You don’t want to use that solution in a centrally administered company network. Contact your system administrator instead. :-)

⁷You can create a new group called `usbprog` or you can simple re-use an existing group like `plugdev` on Ubuntu for storage devices.

3.2 The Update Mode

3.2.1 How USB Works

USB Device Identification

You don't know much about USB to use USBprog. However, one fact is important to understand the limitations of the USBprog especially on Microsoft Windows: How a USB device is identified.

Whenever you connect a USB device to the computer, the USB *host* (the computer) asks the USB *device* a few things. This process is called *enumeration*. After the enumeration process has finished, the USB host assigns the USB device an address. On Linux, this process can be watched in the kernel log with the `dmesg` command:

```
usb 6-1: new full speed USB device using uhci_hcd and address 2
usb 6-1: New USB device found, idVendor=1781, idProduct=0c62
usb 6-1: New USB device strings: Mfr=1, Product=2, SerialNumber=0
usb 6-1: Product: usbprogBase Mode
usb 6-1: Manufacturer: USBprog EmbeddedProjects
usb 6-1: configuration #1 chosen from 1 choice
```

As already mentioned in section [1.4 on page 4](#), the USBprog device has a special *bootloader* that allows the *firmware* to be updated without another device. When you connect the USBprog to the computer, the device normally starts the firmware. If you have flashed for example the `avrispmk2` firmware, then the device identifies as "Atmel AVR ISP mkII"⁸.

Important: Although the USBprog is always the same hardware device, depending on the operation mode and the firmware, it is seen as totally different devices from the computer's point of view. It can even change its identity at runtime without re-attaching!

USB Drivers on Windows

Two important things have to be considered when using USB Devices on Microsoft Windows:

- It *does* matter on which USB port a device is connected for a driver. So if you connect the device to a different USB port, the driver installation process has to be repeated. However, since Windows knows the driver from the last time, everything goes automatically—which doesn't Windows prevent from displaying lots of dialogues.
- You need a device driver⁹ for each device.

⁸USB Vendor ID: 0x03eb, USB Device ID: 0x03eb

⁹One exception are HID drivers which can be accessed from a userspace application.

While the first fact is only a bit annoying, the second fact matters when using the USBprog: Since the device can change its identity at runtime, after the identity changes, a new device driver has to be installed. And it's not possible to access the USBprog device while it emulates another device like the Atmel AVR ISP mkII.

However: In normal operation, that's not a problem. I just wanted to explain that fact so that you understand why the manual switch to the update mode is necessary.

3.2.2 Switching to the Update Mode

Whenever the firmware (not the bootloader) of the USBprog needs to be updated, the device must be switched from normal operation mode to update mode. There are two ways of putting the USBprog in update mode:

1. Sending some magic stuff to the device that puts the USBprog in update mode at normal operation runtime.
2. Disconnecting the device, setting jumper JP1 (see section [2.1.2 on page 6](#)) and connecting the device again.

While the first variant seems to be easier (especially when developing a new firmware where you have to re-flash the USBprog every few minutes), it clearly has its disadvantages: It doesn't work on Windows for the reasons already explained and it sometimes doesn't seem to work reliably at all.

Therefore: As ordinary user, we always recommend to use the jumper to switch to update mode! After programming, the USBprog automatically switches from update mode to normal mode¹⁰. So don't forget to remove the jumper to prevent the USBprog from starting in update mode at next time you connect the USBprog again or the computer boots.

To detect if the firmware is in update mode—you may already have noticed it—the red LED flashes in a sequence “flash, flash, pause, flash, flash, ...”.

¹⁰yes, even on Windows

Bibliography

- [1] AVRDUDE Manual, <http://www.nongnu.org/avrdude/user-manual/avrdude.html>
- [2] “Installing MacPorts”, <http://www.macports.org/install.php>