

Quick Start Guide :

Asking for help from others (A.K.A. Swallowing of the Pride)

Inevitably, even the most experienced user of OperationsPro will run into a problem that they have not seen before. So, once the problem has been identified (possibly) and after having checked the JMRI.org Help System for the solution and still failing to resolve it, it's time to ask for help. This step-by-step guide should direct the user in asking for help in a useful way.

Luckily, there is a JMRI Users Group composed of members who are willing to help you. Before you can ask your question, however, you must first join the group (don't worry, it's free).

Step-by-step "How-To":

1. Go to the website by clicking here---> <https://groups.io/g/jmriusers/join>.
2. Read the **Guidelines** in the left menu list for group membership and posting.
3. Enter your email address in the provided field, and "Confirm Email Address".

After you have confirmed your email address, look for the official "welcome" email. Then, feel free to continue your journey of enlightenment...

4. If you would like to ask a question of the JMRI Users Group, there is some basic information you will need to provide in your message post:
 - a. The version of JMRI being used. (found on the **PanelPro** start-up window)
 - b. The version of Java that is installed. (Also on **PanelPro** start-up window)
 - c. The computer and its operating system (Windows 10, Linux, etc.).
 - d. The interface device between your computer and track, if you have track (Sprog, Digitrax PR4, etc.).
 - e. Any additional devices that are attached to the system that you think may be involved in the problem (stationary decoders, boosters, etc.).
 - f. A detailed description of the problem. This would include any messages that come up, what you expect to be happening and what is actually happening when you build trains, etc. Don't worry if you're not familiar with the terms being used, just describe the problem as best you can.
Make sure you include all of the steps you've taken to try to fix the problem.

Be advised that the Groups.io/Topics page will not accept images, screen shots, or other attachments. How to display these will be outlined later.

5. See if your problem matches any of these general issues.
 - a. Your trains are not building correctly, not going to the correct locations, not picking up the correct rolling stock or locomotive, or not following the correct routes or schedules, do the following:
 - i. Make sure your Build Report is set to the highest level of detail.
(See [How-To #002a-Set detail level of a Build Report](#))

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5. a. (cont)
 - ii. Open the Build Report by first selecting the boxes labeled “Build Reports” and “Preview” (located at the bottom of the **Trains** window) then clicking on the “Preview” button next to the train having the issues.
 - iii. If you haven’t already, look through the build report and see if you can notice where things begin to go awry. Don’t worry if you can’t see the problem. You will gain experience just reading them.
 - iv. Copy and paste the entire text of the Build Report into your message post if you think it’s needed. (or if you are asked to by a member).
 - b. You receive an error message that a “File cannot be found”, “Lost Roster or other Operations file”, or other messages unrelated to building a train:
 - i. From the main **PanelPro** window, click menu **Help---**>**System Console**.
 - ii. Click on the “Copy To Clipboard” button at the bottom.
 - iii. Paste the contents into your message post.
6. You may also be asked to paste your User File Locations into a message post.
 - a. From the main **PanelPro** window, click menu **Help---**>**Locations**.
 - b. Click, drag to highlight all the text and copy.
 - c. Paste this list into your message post.
 7. If you think it would be helpful, or you are asked to place a screen shot, other image, or file onto the website for others to examine:
 - a. Open <https://groups.io/g/jmriusers> and log in.
 - b. From the left menu, select **Files**.
 - c. Scroll down to the folder labeled “ProblemsBeingWorkedOn”.
 - d. Click on that folder’s title.
 - i. Click on the blue **New** button at the top and select “New Folder”.
 - ii. Put your name in the “Folder Name” area and add a description.
 - iii. Click **Add**.
 - e. To upload the file, scroll down to your newly created folder and select.
 - i. Click the **New** button again, select “Upload File”.
 - ii. Use the **Browse** button to find the file, and select it.
 - iii. Click **Add** to place it into your folder.

Upon completion of this task(s), the user should be able to place a request for assistance on the JMRI Users forum by posting on the Topics message board. Allow time for others to read the new post before expecting a reply (remember, the moderator must approve your first few posts before they show up).

All these quick-start guides are intended for use with OperationsPro, a stand-alone application accessed from within PanelPro. The use of any other PanelPro functions (such as creating a panel) is NOT required.

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(Edited with permission)