Railmaster and Hornby Elite in Windows 10

RailMaster is written in Microsoft Visual Basic 6 for Windows XP. Both VB6 and XP are obsolete and their Microsoft 'Security Certificates' will have expired. This means that modern aggressive security applications on modern Windows 10 PCs treat RM as being 'untrusted'. Hence why you had to turn off 'BT Web Protect'.

Commercial USB-C to USB-A adaptors should work in theory.

I would test your adaptor with another USB2.0 device such as a printer for example. If the test device works with your adaptor, then there is no reason why it shouldn't work with the eLink [or Elite].

I suspect that your eLink [or Elite] controller detection issue has got absolutely nothing to do with your laptop being USB-C. This is because controller detection issues come up on this forum many times and this is with laptops that have standard USB-A ports.

As I said in my opening paragraph, RM is written in obsolete code. This means that USB device handling is not as 'plug n play' as you find in devices that are native to Windows 10. You probably just need to go into the Windows 10 Device Manager and more specifically RailMaster configuration screens and manually configure the eLink [or Elite] connections.

First thing first.

Do not have RailMaster running.

Open Windows 'Device Manager' [you will find it in your Windows 10 Control Panel].

Whilst monitoring DM, plug in the eLink [or Elite] controller via your adaptor into your USB-C port.

Does DM then show this following entry [yellow highlight].



If it does then that proves that your eLink is being detected and the eLink driver has been loaded into Windows correctly. In which case ignore the next section below and move on to the '<u>What to do in</u> <u>RailMaster</u>' section of this reply.

If it does not show the highlighted entry [note that the COM4 number may be another number such as for example COM3, COM5, COM6 etc], then the driver has not been loaded yet.

Instead of "USB Serial Port (COMx)" does the entry display "R8214 Hornby Elite (COMx)" [Note that this Hornby driver is the same for an eLink]

If it does, then you have installed the wrong driver. This driver is meant for Windows XP and Vista ONLY. This driver then needs to be completely uninstalled [including the deletion of the Driver SYSTEM file] and the correct driver installed from Microsoft.

Note that to install the Microsoft driver you need to see the Windows plug n play 'Install driver' dialogue appear. If a Microsoft driver is not automatically installed, then you have to select the 'Search Microsoft' option in any dialogue boxes that open. You can usually force the 'plug n play' dialogue to appear by plugging into a different USB port.

Instead of "USB Serial Port (COMx)" does the entry display "CDC RS-232 Emulation Demo". If it does then you are only through the first half of correctly installing the eLink Windows 10 driver and more tasks need to be performed to complete the driver installation.

Right click the "CDC RS-232 Emulation Demo" entry and choose "Update Driver Software"

Then in the next pop-up window choose "Search automatically for updated driver software".

Follow any on screen prompts and the "CDC RS232 Emulation Demo" entry should disappear to be replaced by "USB Serial Port (Com x) where x is the assigned com port number in the device manager "Ports (COM & LPT)" section.

Once you get to the stage where Device Manager is displaying 'USB Serial Port (COMx)" where x is a number. Then take a note of the COMx number and move onto the next step below.

What to do in RailMaster

Start RailMaster as administrator ignoring and cancelling any error messages that might appear.

Open the 'System Setting' screen in RailMaster.

Note that if the 'Controller A' pull down box shows 'Hornby eLink' [or Elite] text with a 'pink' background to the text, then this 'pink' background indicates that there is still a controller communication issue to resolve.

🗙 System Settings 🛛 🗙			
General	Loco D	etection	Advanced
Controler A: Hornby	eLink 🔹	Controller B: Nor	ie 💌
DCC Controller port:	Com3 💌	DCC Controller port:	None
Baud Rate:	115200 💌	Baud Rate:	19200
Data bits:	8 💌	Dats bits:	8
Pority:	None 💌	Parity:	None
Stop bits:	1 💌	Slop bits.	1
Start-up track SAMPLE			
Steam working layout			
Modern working layout (diese/electric)			
Loco control area number across: 1 V Send coal-time arread data:			
Language: English Screed units MPH -			
Maximum number of multiple headers: 1			
Enable system sounds	-	Gauge:	00/EM/P4 💌
Reverse direction conf	trois	Controlled emerg	gency stops

Ensure that Controller B is 'none' and that Controller A has the entries as shown in the image. Make sure that the Com number highlighted in yellow has the COMx number that matches the one displayed in Windows Device Manager.

Note that an Elite should have 19200 instead of 115200 displayed.

Click the green tick to save settings, then close and restart RailMaster and if all is well, the eLink [or Elite] should now be detected without any error messages and be stable in its connection.

If it isn't, then even more RailMaster configuration work is required.

In RailMaster, open the 'Help Screen'. In the lower left corner is a small bluish COG. Click it and follow the on-screen prompts to open the RailMaster .INI file editor.

First things first

How many entry lines do you see in the .INI file. There should be about 30 to 40 lines of text. If there are less than that say about 6 to 10, then your .INI file is corrupted, preventing correct controller detection and you need to re-generate a new .INI file.

Generating a fresh new "railmaster.ini" file

- 1. Download the latest installer from the link at the top of the forum RailMaster & TrackMaster index section.
- 2. With RailMaster **not running**. Delete your current 'railmaster.ini' file from the RailMaster program folder (it is important to delete this file, else a new replacement file will not be generated and the old .INI file will still be used).
- 3. If not already. Connect your eLink [or Elite] to the PC and power it up so that the driver loads in Device Manager.
- 4. Run the downloaded "rm_setup.exe" file by right clicking the 'rm_setup.exe' file and choosing 'Run as administrator'. A new .INI file should then be generated.
- 5. Restart RailMaster, ignore any error messages that **might** appear, just close them and go straight to the .INI file editor.
- 6. Open the new .INI file in edit mode using the COG icon as per my earlier text in this reply and confirm that the file contains about 30 lines or more.
- 7. Make the edits to the file as documented below.

Once you have a complete .INI file with the full number of lines displayed

- Open the .INI file editor [bluish COG icon in the lower left of the RailMaster 'Help Screen'].
- Look for the line "Reset eLink on Start =1"
- Change it to "Reset eLink on Start=0"
- Look for the lines "Check controller=1" & "Alternative comms=1" [these two lines may have =0 values].
- Delete them.
- Type them again as the very last two lines in the file with =1 values for an eLink.
- Save the edits, close and restart RailMaster.

If you have an Elite and not an eLink. Then leave the "Reset eLink on Start=1" line alone, but perform the delete and retype modification making the two values =0

Placing the deleted lines at the end of the file, does not make any logical sense, but it has been proven time and time again to improve RailMaster / controller stability.

If the configuration is now stable and the controller correctly detected when RM starts. Then always use the same USB port for the eLink [or Elite] connection. If you plug into a different port, then Windows is highly likely to assign a different COM number to the port and communication will be lost again and need editing on the 'System Setting' screen.

If at anytime you lose controller connection and get error messages in RM relating to the controller, then it is this COMx number that you need to check and make sure that the number in Windows 'Device Manager' matches the one in the RM 'System Settings' screen. Sometimes a 'Windows Update' can affect these configuration settings.

A USB 2.0 port is preferable over a USB 3.0 port and a COM port number between 2 and 4 provides the highest stability.

RailMaster is written for XP using obsolete Visual Basic 6, hence these tweaks help to get the best operational experience.