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Windows 10 home activator

Windows Activation, introduced in Windows XP, checks in with Microsoft when you install Windows or get a new Windows PC. This is an anti-piracy feature — it's designed to annoy you if you're using a non-genuine copy of Windows. Luckily, Windows Activation has been toned down after its introduction in Windows XP. Even if your PC fails activation, it will continue to function until you can fix the problem — unless you're using Windows XP. If you are, you should upgrade anyway. How Windows Product Activation Works Windows will prompt you to activate with Microsoft after you install it. When you activate over the Internet, your copy of Windows checks in with Microsoft and reports its product key. If your Windows product key is non-genuine (in other words, a pirated key) or is being used on another computer, the activation process will fail. Windows can also be activated with a phone call. Windows provides a code you type in over the phone, and you'll have to enter the code it responds with into your computer. You can also talk to a real person, which is useful if the activation process is failing. For example, if you're moving Windows to a new computer, you may have to talk to a real person and explain the situation before they'll allow Windows to activate. "Significant" hardware changes can also trigger the Windows activation process again. For example, if you swap out multiple components on your PC at the same time, you may have to go through the activation process. Microsoft hasn't explained exactly which hardware changes will trigger this. OEM Activation RELATED: Beginner Geek: How to Reinstall Windows on Your Computer The OEM Activation feature helps ensure that most people will never have to deal with Windows activation. PC manufacturers insert a digital product key into a Windows PC's BIOS during manufacturing. When you buy a PC with Windows preinstalled, Windows automatically activates over the Internet using the OEM (original equipment manufacturer) product key. You can replace much of the hardware in the computer without triggering a reactivation. If you install a different copy of Windows on a PC that came with an OEM Windows key, you'll have to go through the standard Windows Product Activation process. The OEM activation process only works when you use the copy of Windows that came with your computer or restore that original copy of Windows. When Windows Activation Fails Different things happen on different versions of Windows when activation fails or when you exceed the grace period without performing Windows Activation. On Windows XP, the operating system will be unusable after 30 days or if activation fails. In some cases, Windows XP seems to have a 60 day grace period instead. If activation fails or you exceed 30 days without activating on Windows 7 or Vista, you'll see a message saying you're using a non-genuine version of Windows at the bottom-right corner of your screen. The desktop background may also turn black. Only critical updates and security patches can be downloaded from Windows Update, and Windows will regularly remind you to fix the problem and activate your operating system. Luckily, Windows will still be usable. There is no grace period on Windows 8. If you haven't activated your operating system, you'll see a message with the version of Windows at the bottom-right corner of your screen. Many personalization features will also be disabled — for example, you can't change the wallpaper if you haven't activated Windows 8 yet. Thankfully, the penalties for not activating Windows have become less harsh in modern versions of Windows. You'll still be able to use your computer if you have a problem with Windows activation. Microsoft just wants to bug you into using a legitimate version of Windows and buying a legitimate product key. This feature also prevents smaller computer manufacturers from installing pirated copies of Windows on their PCs and selling them to unsuspecting buyers. What About Windows XP? RELATED: Microsoft is Ending Support for Windows XP in 2014: What You Need to Know Microsoft is ending support for Windows XP on April 8, 2014, and we know that Windows XP won't even function after the grace period if it can't activate. If Microsoft took down the activation servers, this would be a problem. Luckily for all those Windows XP users who haven't yet switched to modern operating system, Microsoft has announced they'll continue operating the Windows XP activation servers. Those old copies of Windows XP will continue to work, install, and activate normally. In the future, other versions of Windows should continue to activate even after Microsoft ends support for them. As long as Microsoft is running the activation servers, things should continue working smoothly. Microsoft Office also includes an activation feature that requires you activate new copies of Microsoft Office with Microsoft to protect against piracy. This feature works similarly, but Office will only function in read-only mode if it hasn't been successfully activated. You'll need to activate Office to create or edit documents. Image Credit: Karl Baron on Flickr Knowing how to activate Windows 10 may not seem like the most necessary skill. After all, most of the best laptops and computers loaded with Windows 10 just require a quick set up to get you going. But, if you're starting from scratch with a new build and have already invested in the best graphics card and best processor, not to mention the best SSD, for a serious machine, you'll need to use a clean installation of Windows 10. And, it will need to be activated. How you end up doing that will depend on a few factors. If that installation has already been activated with a product key, you'll have to have that key on hand to activate Windows 10 again. If your Microsoft account is linked to the Windows 10 license, you can re-activate that license on the same computer, even if you've swapped out a lot of the parts. To help you on how to activate Windows 10, we've put together this step-by-step guide so you'll know what to do with both product keys and digital licenses. So, go ahead and scroll down to the section that applies to you to help you get up-and-running in no time. If you don't have it, here's how to find your Windows 10 product key. How to perform a password reset in Windows 10 How to activate Windows 10 with a product key Whether you've just built a new computer or are re-activating a computer that previously had Windows 10 activated using a product key, here's the way to use a product key to activate Windows 10. Step one: input your product key during Windows 10 installation. This will be included either with your box or your documentation provided with a digital purchase. If you're proactive, you can easily activate Windows 10 while you're installing it. During the installation process, you'll be asked to input your 25-character product key. Entering it at this stage will activate it for you so you're ready to go as soon as the installation is complete. If you don't have your product key ready during installation, you can still proceed and activate later. Once Windows 10 is installed, you can activate it with your key using the next steps. Image Credit: TechRadar (Image credit: TechRadar) Step two: Press the Windows key, then go to Settings > Update & Security > Activation (or type "activation" into the search bar). Step three: Find and press Change product key. Step four: Type your product key into pop-up box, press Next, and then press Activate. (Note: you'll need to be online to activate.) You can follow these steps to activate a Windows 10 license even if you already have one active on your system. You might do this if you're switching editions of Windows 10. If you don't have a product key, you can also go from the Activation page directly to the Windows Store to buy a product key. How to activate Windows 10 with a digital license Windows 10 made it a lot easier to re-activate Windows 10, thanks to the ability to link your Windows 10 licenses to your Microsoft account. If you have a computer already activated on Windows 10 and want to be able to use this process in the future, see Microsoft's steps on linking your Microsoft account. You can confirm your account is linked before making any system changes or re-installing Windows 10 by going to Settings > Update & Security > Activation, and looking for "Windows is activated with a digital license linked to your Microsoft Account" in the Activation section of the window. (Note: You can only use this method to activate the same Windows 10 edition as your account had previously been linked to; Home, Pro, etc. You'll also need an active internet connection.) Image Credit: TechRadar (Image credit: TechRadar) Step one: During Windows 10 installation, select I don't have a product key when prompted to activate. Step two: Setup and log into Windows 10 using the Microsoft account you linked to your Windows 10 digital license. (You can also set up a local account, and then add a Microsoft account afterward.) Windows may automatically activate at this point. You'll be able to check whether Windows has activated using your linked digital license in the next step. If you've made significant hardware changes, you may need to follow the next steps. (Note: you'll need to perform the following steps as an Administrator in Windows to complete them successfully.) Step three: With Windows running, press the Windows key, then go to Settings > Update & Security > Activation. Step four: If Windows 10 is not activated, find and press Troubleshoot. (Note: Not the Troubleshoot option listed in the sidebar.) Step five: In the new window, select Activate Windows and then Activate, or choose "I changed hardware on this device recently" if you've changed out components on your PC. Step six: Follow any sign-in prompts using the account details for the Microsoft account linked to your digital license (you may also need the local account password is you created one for your PC). Step seven: Find the computer you're using in the list of devices, then check the box next to "This is the device I'm using right now" and press Activate. After this, your digital license should kick in and activate your copy of Windows 10. If it still fails to activate, you can find more details on the Activation troubleshooter here.

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