Windows 10 Activation

Check your Windows 10 license

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Run the following command in an elevated command prompt:

wmic path SoftwareLicensingService get 0A3x0riginalProductKey

Park a free Windows 10 upgrade license

- 1. Install Windows 10 Home or Pro on the machine you want to park the license, the best way is to install it into a newly created Microsoft VHD Virtual Machine.
- 2. During installation, enter a valid key of a Windows 7, 8.0, or 8.1 license.
- 3. OEM licenses can be upgraded too. However, note the limitations of the license. For example, OEM licenses for Dell computers can only be used on Dell computers.
- 4. Boot into Windows 10 after installation, but do not activate the license yet.
- 5. Currently, the free licenses expired end of July 2016.

Activate a Windows 10 upgrade license

- 1. Make a fresh install of Windows 10 on the new machine.
- 2. During installation, select *I don't have a license key*.
- 3. After installation is finished, go to Settings -> Update & Security -> Activation and activate Windows 10 with the license key of the original Windows 7, 8.0, or 8.1.

Move an activated Windows 10 upgrade license to another machine

- 1. Make sure you register the machine to be retired as a Microsoft device by changing your login to a Microsoft linked account.
- 2. Copy or Clone the Windows 10 partition of the machine you want to retire (e.g. where the license is moved *from*)
- 3. Make a fresh install of Windows 10 on the new machine. The fresh install does not need the linked account to be activated later.
- 4. Move the cloned Windows 10 partition after the fresh install.
- 5. Modify the BCD Store to a dual-boot configuration. This is easiest done with EasyBCD.
- 6. Boot into the cloned Windows 10 partition which was activated before, then go to Settings -> Update & Security -> Activation. Select *Troubleshoot* (which is not available on a fresh install), then I changed hardware on this device recently.
- 7. Activation will take you to your Microsoft account. Select the machine to be retired (see step 1) and select the check box **This is the device I'm using right now**, and then select **Activate**. The machine data on Microsofts servers will now be replaced with the one from your new machine.

- 8. Boot offline into the fresh install and change machine name (and work group) to the one used in the cloned install. Reboot, then connect internet.
- 9. Wait for auto activation or go to Settings -> Update & Security -> Activation and click **Activate**. The fresh install will now be activated.
- 10. Delete the cloned install. Using the fresh install ensures that you do not carry outdated drivers and apps for the retired machine with you.

Links

- Reactivating Windows 10 after a hardware change
- Configure UEFI/GPT-Based Hard Drive Partitions
- How to deactivate and uninstall Windows Product Key
- When can you move a Windows license to a new PC?
- How to repair the EFI bootloader on a GPT HDD for Windows 7, 8, 8.1 and 10 on your Dell PC

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