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Microsoft Windows XP Professional Downgrade Overview

Abstract: In October of 2001, Microsoft released Windows XP Professional as their latest operating system for business. Microsoft has included a new End User License Agreement (EULA) which provides users with the right to downgrade to select Microsoft operating systems. This document will explain these downgrade rights, provide scenarios under which customers can take advantage of this change and answer frequently asked questions.

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Highlights

Primary benefit of the new Microsoft Windows XP Professional End User License agreement:

- Operating System Downgrade rights to:
 - Windows 98 Second Edition
 - Windows NT Workstation 4.0
 - Windows 2000 Professional

Introduction

On October 25th, 2001, Microsoft released Windows XP Professional as their latest operating system for business. Along with the numerous features that have been added to the new operating system, Microsoft has included a new End User License Agreement (EULA). One of the most significant changes to the Windows XP Professional EULA when compared to Windows 2000 Professional EULA is the right for end users to downgrade to select Microsoft operating systems. This document will explain these downgrade rights and provide scenarios under which customers can take advantage of this change.

End User License Agreement

Downgrade Rights

The Microsoft Windows XP Professional EULA allows customers downgrade rights to Windows 98 Second Edition (SE), Windows NT Workstation 4.0 and Windows 2000 Professional.

This change will affect the manner in which customers deploy these legacy OS's. Starting June 30, 2002, Compaq Computer Corporation and other computer manufacturers will no longer be able to ship standard desktop, notebook or workstation models with Windows 98 SE or Windows NT Workstation 4.0 licenses. Our standard Evo models will be available with Windows 2000 Professional (through the March 31st, 2003), Windows XP Home or Windows XP Professional preinstalled. Availability of these operating systems may vary by model.

Customer Benefit

Those customers who are interested in deploying the legacy OS's can use of the Windows XP Professional End User License Agreement (EULA). The EULA provides customers with license rights from Microsoft to downgrade to select legacy OS's.

Customers who have created their own customer Windows 98 SE, Windows 2000 Professional or Windows NT Workstation 4.0 images will be able to purchase Windows XP Professional models and downgrade easily and legally. There are no provisions for downgrade to Windows 95. The right to downgrade is not included in the Windows 2000 Professional or Windows XP Home EULAs, therefore customers who purchase models with these operating systems are not eligible for downgrade.

Summary

The Windows XP Professional EULA provides a high degree of flexibility. Customers who purchase models with this operating system will be able to deploy their choice of Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows NT Workstation 4.0 or Windows 2000 Professional today, then upgrade these computers back to Windows XP Professional at a later date.

User Scenarios

Four common scenarios are presented along with recommendations. These examples provide some direction for our customers.

Scenario One:

Customer is currently using Windows NT Workstation (or Windows 98 SE) and plans to migrate to Windows XP Professional sometime in the second half of 2002. Customer currently purchases Windows NT Workstation 4.0 (or Windows 98 SE) models from Compaq and installs its own custom image that was created using a version of the OS obtained from a Microsoft authorized retailer, distributor, or by volume license agreement.

Recommendation:

1. Start purchasing Windows XP Professional models today
2. Deploy custom images using current process

These systems can be upgraded to Windows XP Professional at a later date at no additional cost.

Scenario Two:

Customer is currently using Windows 98 SE (or Windows NT Workstation 4.0) and is migrating to Windows 2000 Professional. Customer has a custom image that was created with the Compaq preinstall image as a starting point.

Recommendation:

1. Start purchasing Windows XP Professional models today
2. Continue to deploy custom image
 - Compaq Custom Solutions group can develop custom images for customers requiring this service

These systems can be upgraded to Windows XP Professional at a later date at no additional cost.

Scenario Three:

Customer is currently using Windows 98 SE (or Windows NT Workstation 4.0) and is investigating migration paths. Customer uses the Compaq image.

Recommendation:

1. Plan to begin purchasing Windows XP Professional models by June 2002
2. If migrating to Windows 2000 Professional, develop a Windows 2000 Professional image based on a Compaq preinstall image, or version of the OS obtained from a Microsoft authorized retailer, distributor, or by volume license agreement; if migrating to Windows XP Professional, develop a Windows XP Professional image based on either the Compaq OS or a version of the OS obtained from a Microsoft authorized retailer, distributor, or by volume license agreement; if it's infeasible to move to Windows 2000 Professional or Windows XP Professional before July 2002, develop a Windows 98 SE (or Windows NT Workstation 4.0) image that can be easily deployed
 - Compaq Custom Solutions group can develop custom images for customers requiring this service

Scenario Four:

Customer has recently completed migration to Windows 2000 Professional and will continue to use this operating system after March 2003. Customer has a custom image that was created using the Compaq preinstall image as a base.

Recommendation:

1. Continue to purchase Windows 2000 Professional models through March 2003 using the current customized image
2. Plan to begin purchasing Windows XP Professional models by April 2003. Use downgrade rights to deploy the customized Windows 2000 Professional image.
 - These models can be upgraded to Windows XP Professional at a later date at no additional cost.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I change the operating system preinstalled on my computer?

The End User License Agreement (EULA) for Windows XP Professional allows for downgrade to Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows NT Workstation 4.0 or Windows 2000 Professional. This provision is not applicable to any other operating system.

Will the Windows XP Professional EULA allow me to downgrade to Windows 95 or Windows XP Home?

No, the Windows XP Professional EULA doesn't allow for downgrades to these OS's.

If I want to downgrade, does Compaq provide the alternate operating system?

Generally no, the Windows XP Professional EULA specifies that neither Compaq nor Microsoft will provide the alternate OS version. However, Microsoft has given Compaq the right to provide a Windows 98SE, Windows NT Workstation 4.0 or Windows 2000 Professional image based off the Microsoft OEM Preinstall Kit (OPK) to customers who request this. Customers can also use a version of the OS obtained from a Microsoft authorized retailer, distributor, or by volume license agreement.

I create my own Windows (98/NT/2000) image. How does this benefit me?

The Windows XP Professional EULA provides a high degree of flexibility. By purchasing system with Windows XP Professional preinstalled, you can continue to deploy your custom 98/NT/2000 images and upgrade to Windows XP Professional at a later date.

I've just migrated to Windows 2000 Professional and don't intend to upgrade my OS for at least 12 months. Why should I buy Windows XP Professional preinstalled?

Based on Microsoft's current OS Lifecycle Guidelines, Windows 2000 Professional will only be offered preinstalled by PC vendors through March 2003. If you intend to use Windows 2000 Professional through 2003, you can purchase Windows XP Professional and downgrade.

Will all new Evo notebook, desktop and workstation models support Windows 98 SE and Windows NT Workstation 4.0?

No, only select models will provide this support. Please consult the QuickSpecs for model specific information.

References

For Microsoft's Operating Systems Guidelines, visit the Microsoft Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/lifecycleconsumer.asp>

For comprehensive online support, visit the Compaq Web site at: <http://www.compaq.com>

For international information, visit the Compaq Web site at:

http://www.compaq.com/corporate/overview/world_offices.html

Table 1. Departments and Telephone Numbers for Canada and the United States

Department	Telephone Numbers
Consumer Direct	1-800-888-0220
Compaq DirectPlus	1-800-888-5858 (U.S.)
Compaq Partner Direct	1-800-888-5874
Compaq Reseller Locator	1-800-345-1518 (Option 3)
Compaq Canadian Reseller Locator and Product Literature	1-800-567-1616
Diskette Fulfillment (backup diskettes for preinstalled software)	1-800-952-7689 (U.S.) 1-800-349-8498 (Canada)
Compaq Product Information	1-800-345-1518 (U.S.) 1-800-567-1616 (Canada)
Compaq Technical Support	1-800-OK-COMPAQ (U.S. and Canada) 1-800-652-6672