

Windows XP Downgrade rights: a clarification

Dear Customers,

As you most likely know, the downgrade rights to Windows XP were extended in last July 2010; Microsoft initially limited the downgrade rights to coincide with the release of Windows 7 SP1, or 18 months after General Availability. Customers can now leverage the downgrade rights for the entire life cycle of Windows 7.

OEM versions of Windows **7 Professional** may be downgraded to either Windows Vista Business or Windows XP Professional. Similar end user downgrade rights (to XP Professional) are provided for the following Windows operating systems pre-installed on a new PC (OEM versions):

- Windows 7 Ultimate Edition
- Windows Vista Business Edition
- Windows Vista Ultimate Edition

Microsoft strongly suggest that your customer works with the computer manufacturer that they procured their systems from, to re-image with the desired OS (Win XP Pro for instance). This process can be tedious and your system builder would know best how to proceed with this operation.

Regarding sourcing the media

The downgrade media can be associated with any prior legally licensed version from the OEM system builder or retail channels. Additionally, an end user, who is licensed separately through Microsoft Volume Licensing programs, may provide their Volume Licensing media and key to their system builder to use to facilitate the downgrade of their systems.

Regarding activation keys

Once Windows Vista Business, Windows Vista Ultimate, or Windows XP Professional is installed, the PC will prompt for a Windows Vista Business, Windows Vista Ultimate, or Windows XP Professional product key in order to activate the software. **The product key associated with the original Windows software should be used for activation.** If the Windows Vista Business, Windows Vista Ultimate, or Windows XP Professional product key has been previously activated, which is likely if the media came from a prior legally licensed version that has been activated in the past, the software may be unable to activate over the Internet. When this happens, **the appropriate local Activation Support phone number will be displayed, and the person performing the downgrade will need to call the Activation Support Line and explain the circumstances to a customer service representative.**

Once it is determined that the end user has a valid Windows 7 Professional, Windows 7 Ultimate, Windows Vista Business, or Windows Vista Ultimate license, the customer service representative will provide a single-use activation code that can be used to activate Windows.

Note: Additionally an **end user who is licensed separately through Microsoft Volume Licensing programs, may provide their Volume Licensing media and key to their System Builder** to facilitate the downgrade of their systems. If your customer already owns perpetual licenses of Windows XP Professional bought under a previous Volume Licensing program, they can use that product key to activate their downgraded systems too (as long as the product edition matches, XP Professional in this example).

Reminder

One of the key take-away's of the LiveMeeting was the importance of selling the right edition of Windows 7 OEM in order to cover any future upgrade that the customer would want to do. The "Professional" edition of windows 7 should ALWAYS be your recommendation. Windows 7 Home Premium OEM for instance will NOT allow the customer to purchase an upgrade license as part of a Volume Licensing program in the future. If they wish to upgrade from Home Premium, they will then have to re-purchase the full license again (through FPP for instance) and then attach SA within 90 days. Much more cumbersome, expensive and less practical. Remember: the OS license under Volume Licensing is an UPGRADE only. You MUST have an underlying license in order to purchase an Upgrade license through Volume Licensing.

May the Force of Licensing be with You,
Microsoft