

Downgrading Microsoft Windows Vista Business on Business Notebooks Field Communiqué



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Background

In January of 2007, Microsoft launched Windows Vista. This version is the replacement for Windows XP, although both versions will be available for a period of time. Windows XP was launched in October of 2001 with OEM preinstall license availability through January of 2008.

OS Downgrade Rights

With Windows XP Professional, Microsoft offered a license which allowed downgrade to several previously released operating systems; Windows 2000 Professional, Windows NT Workstation 4.0, or Windows 98 SE. Although support for Windows NT and Windows 98 has been discontinued, this option continues to provide a downgrade path for Windows 2000 on supported models.

The Windows Vista Business End User License Agreement allows for downgrade to Windows XP Professional, Windows XP Tablet or Windows XP Professional x64.

OS Downgrade Options

Systems configured with Windows Vista Business can be downgraded using genuine Windows XP OS media obtained from HP, the retail channel or through volume licensing channels. If the BIOS locked HP OS media is used, Windows XP will not prompt for a product identification number (PID) during installation. If media from an alternate source is used, a prompt for the PID will be displayed during installation. Microsoft advises that when prompted a PID from the certificate of authenticity label from another PC should be used. After the installation process is complete, the OS will be prompt for activation. Internet based activation will fail if a PID from another PC is used. At this point, the activation wizard will advise the user to contact Microsoft. Customers can call Microsoft support in order to have Windows XP activated manually.

Obtaining OS Media (MS Policy Change)

As of June 2007, HP is now able to fulfill XP Professional restore media to customers who have purchased systems configured with Windows Vista Business and include XP Professional restore media in our SKUs configured with Windows Vista Business through July of 2008. If a PC was purchased with Windows Vista Business installed, customers can request Windows XP OS media from HP service. Alternatively, check with local HP authorized resellers for media availability. Although it will vary by reseller, some may be able to provide various services in order to assist in the downgrade, including full installation services for a fee.

Downgrade Process

If the customer wants to restore Windows Vista™ Business in the future, and Vista recovery media was not included with the PC, begin with step 1 in the following procedure to create recovery media. Otherwise, begin with step 3.

1. Turn on the PC.
2. Create Vista Business restore media using HP Backup and Recovery Manager. For detailed instructions, refer to the user documentation included with the PC.
 - This process can take several hours.
3. Turn on or restart the system, with the Windows XP Professional OS disc in the DVD drive.
4. Follow the onscreen instructions to install the operating system.
5. When prompted during Windows XP Professional Setup, delete the existing partitions and create a new partition using the maximum size allowed, then proceed with OS installation.
 - This completely removes the Vista factory preinstall image and recovery partition.
6. After OS installation is complete, insert the Driver Recovery DVD for the model.
 - If the DVD does not run immediately, browse to X:\SWSETUP\APPINSTL (X: represents the drive letter assigned to the DVD drive) and double-click the setup.exe file to launch HP Software Setup, which will present a list of software available for installation.
 - § Office 2007 software is not included in the Driver Recovery DVD
7. Select the check box to install all hardware-enabling drivers and utilities.
8. Select recommended and optional software as desired, and follow the on-screen instructions to complete installation.

For additional information regarding operating system installation and for the latest softpaqs, visit the HP website at www.hp.com.

Questions and answers

Where do I get the CD to install the downgrade software?
If the system was purchased with Windows Vista Business and OS restore media was not included with the system, this media can be ordered by contacting HP support through July of 2008.
Who can install the downgrade software or reinstall the original software?
A reseller (when authorized by end user) or the end user.
Can HP ship media for the downgrade software system as well as most recent version they are using to downgrade from?
Yes, HP is allowed to fulfill Windows XP Professional OS media to customers who have purchased systems configured with Windows Vista Business through July of 2008.
When a previously licensed version of Windows XP Professional is used for the downgrade, won't Windows product activation fail on the new PC?
When using downgrade rights offered under the License Terms in Windows Vista Business and Ultimate versions and a Windows XP product key that was previously activated, on-line activation over the Internet will fail due to the hardware configuration change when installing on the Vista system. In these cases the OS will be prompt to call the Activation Support Line and explain the circumstances to the Customer Service Representative. Once it is determined that the Vista Business or Ultimate license is valid, the Customer Service Representative will manually activate Windows XP.
Can I return to Windows Vista Business software after they downgrade?
Yes. Those who downgrade may reinstall the original software when they are ready to migrate, provided that Windows XP Professional software is deleted from the PC.
How do I reinstall the original software after downgrading to a previous version?
Use HP Backup and Recovery Manager to create recovery media for the factory installed image. Use this media to return to Windows Vista when desired. The downgrade software must be deleted from the hard drive before the original software is reinstalled.
If I have the Windows XP Professional OS CD, where do they get Windows XP drivers?
Windows XP drivers are available on HP.com for supported models. Alternatively, driver recovery media for Windows XP can be obtained through HP service.

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