*EXPERT TIPS*

# Upgrading: Windows XP to Windows 7 Professional

If you've decided to upgrade your business from Windows XP to Windows 7 Professional, you are probably wondering where to start, and have a lot of questions. Fortunately, there are a number of easy-to-use tools and technologies that can help you make the move when it's time to upgrade to Windows 7 Professional.

Check out our how-to-video, Upgrading to Windows 7 for Small and Midsize Businesses for an overview of the upgrade process. If your organization will be upgrading less than 50 PCs, and you are performing the deployment yourself, check out our video, Manual Installation of Windows 7 for step-by-step instructions. For larger installations, click here.

## Are You Ready for Windows 7 Professional?

To find out if your PCs are ready for the upgrade to Windows 7 Professional, use Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor. This free utility scans your hardware, devices, and installed programs for known compatibility issues, gives you guidance on how to resolve potential issues, and will give you recommendations on steps to take before you upgrade. To get information on the processor, RAM, and hard disk space required to run Windows 7 Professional, visit the Windows 7 System Requirements page.

**What About Compatibility?**
When upgrading to Windows 7 Professional, it's smart to know upfront about how to address compatibility issues without having to search for installation discs, or scour the Web for drivers. The Windows 7 Compatibility Center is a one-stop shop that can help you find the downloads you need to get up and running quickly with Windows 7 Professional.

But what about software compatibility? While Windows 7 Professional was built to be able to run many existing Windows XP programs, there will be some exceptions which might not run as smoothly. Windows XP Mode can help you run older software that would not otherwise run on Windows 7 Professional so you can unlock any limited functionality you may experience, and significantly reduce error messages.

> **Are You Ready for Windows 7 Professional?**
>
> **Upgrade, or Clean Install?**
>
> **One at a Time, or All at Once?**

## Upgrade, or Clean Install?

Many industry experts, including those at ZDnet, recommend a clean install over an upgrade when moving from Windows XP to Windows 7 Professional. But what is the difference between the two methods?

A clean installation erases everything on your hard drive. If you have Windows XP, you cannot do an upgrade—you must do a clean installation. So you'll need to back up all your files, photos, music, and settings on an external hard drive or on CDs or DVDs, and then transfer them back to your PC after you install Windows 7 Professional. You'll also need to reinstall all your programs from their original installation disks. Watch this video to find out how to upgrade Windows XP to Windows 7 Professional while retaining users' documents and settings.

With an upgrade installation, Windows 7 will simply replace Windows Vista without affecting anything else on your PC. You can do an upgrade installation from many editions of Windows Vista depending on which edition of Windows 7 you want to install.

**Some Tips:**

- Use Windows Easy Transfer to move your old Windows files, folders, and program settings quickly and easily to Windows 7 Professional.

- Streamline deployment by building a standard image of Windows 7 (recommended for small business with more than 50 PCs)

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## One at a Time, or All at Once?

Most experts recommend updating your entire environment simultaneously, if it is financially realistic for your business. According to a recent Microsoft survey with 500 Small Businesses, 28% of small businesses responding said that they had already upgraded some or all of their PCs to Windows 7 Professional. Twenty-five percent had plans in place to upgrade some of their PCs, and 18% are planning to upgrade most or all of their PCs to Windows 7 Professional.

According to a February 2010 report by Forrester Research, upgrading PCs to Windows 7 Professional can result in reaching a "break even" point in as few as 13 months. In addition, a recent IDC research study found that small businesses migrating 40 PCs to Windows 7 Professional gained benefits equal to one additional full-time employee. By deploying Windows 7 Professional simultaneously company-wide, the initial investment pays for itself quickly, freeing up a significant amount of capital to support strategic business goals.
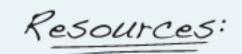
In addition to the rapid ROI, upgrading multiple computers at once also enables you to take advantage of new Windows 7 Professional features like Domain Join, which enables you to quickly and securely add PCs, and share files and printers within your business network. Upgrading all your computers at once also makes it easier to manage software updates and other scheduled maintenance.

Ultimately, you will have to weigh the pros and cons of company-wide upgrade and decide for yourself what is best for your organization. If you do elect to migrate most or all of your PCs to Windows 7 Professional simultaneously, it is recommended that you perform an automated installation.

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### *Resources:*

**Summary Link Web Part**

32-bit and 64-bit Windows FAQ
Automated Installation of Windows 7
Building a Standard Image of Windows 7
Manual Installation of Windows 7
Upgrading to Windows 7 for Small and Midsize Business
Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor

**Microsoft**