

Installing or upgrading to Microsoft Windows 11 on unsupported devices

There are numerous sites on the internet that can guide you on installing Windows 11 on unsupported hardware.

As expected, Microsoft does not recommend nor guarantee installation on unsupported hardware and the devices aren't guaranteed to receive any feature, performance or security updates.

When an attempt to upgrade an unsupported device to Windows 11 is made, a disclaimer is shown to remind the user that continuing the installation implies the user accepts all responsibility.

“This PC doesn't meet the minimum system requirements for running Windows 11 - these requirements help ensure a more reliable and higher quality experience. Installing Windows 11 on this PC is not recommended and may result in compatibility issues. If you proceed with installing Windows 11, your PC will no longer be supported and won't be entitled to receive updates. Damages to your PC due to lack of compatibility aren't covered under the manufacturer warranty. By selecting Accept, you are acknowledging that you read and understand this statement.”

Windows is not something you own, but something you license. I'm not a lawyer, but upgrading unsupported hardware to Windows 11 might be a violation of the Windows end user license agreement*; in which case Microsoft would have the right to not support Windows 11 on that device.

While I don't endorse this method, I'm sure that a lot of users will follow the workarounds. The people who have discovered the ways around the restrictions will probably continue to update and improve their hacks, so this alternative may be available for a period of time.

If you are not pretty good with a computer, remember that installing Windows 11 on unsupported hardware will add a layer of complexity if you need any support in the future.

There is another legal alternative which is installing a different operating system. For most people that would be a version of Linux. There are free Office Suites for Linux which can read and edit docx and xlsx files (MS Office complains if you try to reload in an MS Office program.), games and pretty much everything else. There are database and presentation programs; CAD programs; audio editors; image and video editors; etc. I have been using Windows versions of some of these for several years.

* From C:\Windows\System32\license.rtf on my Thinkbook:

“Last updated June 2021

MICROSOFT SOFTWARE LICENSE TERMS

WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEM

2. Installation and Use Rights.

c. Restrictions. The device manufacturer or installer and Microsoft reserve all rights (such as rights under intellectual property laws) not expressly granted in this agreement and no other rights are licensed to you. For the avoidance of doubt, this license does not give you any right to, and you may not (and you may not permit any other person or entity to):

(iv) work around any technical restrictions or limitations in the software;”