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How to extend the Windows Server 2008 evaluation period

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SUMMARY

This article describes how to extend, or re-arm, the Windows Server 2008 evaluation period. The evaluation period is also known as the "activation grace" period. These instructions apply to any edition of Windows Server 2008. This includes evaluation copies.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

INTRODUCTION

Evaluating Windows Server 2008 software does not require product activation. Any edition of Windows Server 2008 may be installed without activation, and it may be evaluated for 60 days. Additionally, the 60-day evaluation period may be reset (re-armed) three times. This action extends the original 60-day evaluation period by up to 180 days for a total possible evaluation time of 240 days.

Note In the Windows Server 2008 Evaluation DVD package, there is a 120-day initial evaluation period. You can extend the evaluation period to 240 days. To extend the initial evaluation and testing period, follow the steps in this Microsoft Knowledge Base article.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

MORE INFORMATION

How to install Windows Server 2008 without activating it

1. Run the Windows Server 2008 Setup program.
2. When you are prompted to enter a product key for activation, do not enter a key. Click **No** when Setup asks you to confirm your selection.
3. You may be prompted to select the edition of Windows Server 2008 that you want to evaluate. Select the edition that you want to install.

Note After Windows Server 2008 is installed, the edition cannot be changed without reinstalling it.

4. When you are prompted, read the evaluation terms in the Microsoft Software License Terms, and then accept the terms.
5. When the Windows Server 2008 Setup program is finished, your initial 60-day evaluation period starts. To check the time that is left on your current evaluation period, run the `slmgr.vbs` script that is in the `System32` folder. Use the `-dli` switch to run this script. The `slmgr.vbs -dli` command displays the number of days that are left in the current 60-day evaluation period.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

How to manually extend the evaluation period

When the initial 60-day evaluation period nears its end, you can run the `slmgr.vbs` script to reset the evaluation period. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, and then click **Command Prompt**.
2. Type `slmgr.vbs -dli`, and then press ENTER to check the current status of your evaluation period.
3. To reset the evaluation period, type `slmgr.vbs -rearm`, and then press ENTER.
4. Restart the computer.

This resets the evaluation period to 60 days.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

How to automate the extension of the evaluation period

You may want to set up a process that automatically resets the evaluation period every 60 days. One way to automate this process is by using the Task Scheduler. You can configure the Task Scheduler to run the `slmgr.vbs` script and to restart the server at a particular time. To do this, follow these steps:

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1. Click **Start**, point to **Administrative Tools**, and then click **Task Scheduler**.
2. Copy the following sample task to the server, and then save it as an .xml file. For example, you can save the file as **Extend.xml**.

```
<?
xml
version="1.0"
encoding="UTF-
16"?
>

<Task
version="1.2"
xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/windows/2004/02/mit/task">

<RegistrationInfo>

<Date>2007-
09-
17T14:26:04.433</Date>

<Author>Microsoft
Corporation</Author>

</RegistrationInfo>

<Triggers>

<TimeTrigger
id="18c4a453-
d7aa-
4647-
916b-
af0c3ea16a6b">

<Repetition>

<Interval>P31D</Interval>

<StopAtDurationEnd>>false</StopAtDurationEnd>

</Repetition>

<StartBoundary>2007-
10-
05T02:23:24</StartBoundary>

<EndBoundary>2008-
09-
17T14:23:24.777</EndBoundary>

<Enabled>>true</Enabled>

</TimeTrigger>

</Triggers>

<Principals>

<Principal
id="Author">

<UserId>domain\alias</UserId>
```

```
<LogonType>Password</LogonType>

<RunLevel>HighestAvailable</RunLevel>

</Principal>

</Principals>

<Settings>

<IdleSettings>

<Duration>PT10M</Duration>

<WaitTimeout>PT1H</WaitTimeout>

<StopOnIdleEnd>true</StopOnIdleEnd>

<RestartOnIdle>false</RestartOnIdle>

</IdleSettings>

<MultipleInstancesPolicy>IgnoreNew</MultipleInstancesPolicy>

<DisallowStartIfOnBatteries>true</DisallowStartIfOnBatteries>

<StopIfGoingOnBatteries>true</StopIfGoingOnBatteries>

<AllowHardTerminate>true</AllowHardTerminate>

<StartWhenAvailable>false</StartWhenAvailable>

<RunOnlyIfNetworkAvailable>false</RunOnlyIfNetworkAvailable>

<AllowStartOnDemand>true</AllowStartOnDemand>

<Enabled>true</Enabled>

<Hidden>false</Hidden>

<RunOnlyIfIdle>false</RunOnlyIfIdle>

<WakeToRun>true</WakeToRun>

<ExecutionTimeLimit>P3D</ExecutionTimeLimit>

<DeleteExpiredTaskAfter>PT0S</DeleteExpiredTaskAfter>

<Priority>7</Priority>

<RestartOnFailure>

<Interval>PT1M</Interval>
```

```
<Count>3</Count>

</RestartOnFailure>

</Settings>

<Actions
Context="Author">

<Exec>

<Command>C:\Windows\System32\slmgr.vbs</Command>

<Arguments> -
rearm</Arguments>

</Exec>

<Exec>

<Command>C:\Windows\System32\shutdown.exe</Command>

<Arguments>/r</Arguments>

</Exec>

</Actions>

</Task>
```

3. In the sample task, change the value of the following "UserId" tag to contain your domain and your alias:
`<UserId> domain\alias</UserId>`
4. In the Task Scheduler, click **Import Task** on the **Action** menu.
5. Click the sample task .xml file. For example, click **Extend.xml**.
6. Click **Import**.
7. Click the **Triggers** tab.
8. Click the **One Time** trigger, and then click **Edit**.
9. Change the start date of the task to a date just before the end of your current evaluation period.
10. Click **OK**, and then exit the Task Scheduler.

The Task Scheduler will now run the evaluation reset operation on the date that you specified.

[↑ Back to the top](#)

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[↑ Back to the top](#)

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[↑ Back to the top](#)

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