



BRIEFING NOTE

End of support for Windows 7, Server 2008 and
Small Business Server in January 2020



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What is happening?

Microsoft is ending all support for several software products in January 2020. These products include Windows Server 2008, Windows Server 2008 R2 and all versions of Windows 7.

These products will be classed as end-of-life and unsupported. This means there will not be any more Windows Updates, software patches, security fixes or technical support from Microsoft for these software programs after that date.

In addition, Microsoft are also ending support for some other widely-used software in 2020 including:

- Microsoft Small Business Server 2011
- Microsoft Exchange 2010 email server and
- Microsoft Office 2010 including Word 2010, Excel 2010 and Outlook 2010.



What does this mean for me?

Critically, it means there won't be any more security patches or fixes for any computers with Windows 7 or Server 2008, so they're vulnerable to being exploited. Windows Updates regularly include security fixes that can help protect your PC from harmful viruses, spyware and other malicious software which can infect your devices.

This is exactly how computers get infected nowadays: people will deliberately attempt to get in via these security holes in Windows PCs and servers. You may remember in May 2017, the NHS was crippled by a malware attack that had specifically targeted a Windows security hole. The NHS hadn't installed the update (a fix for the problem, that was already available) and the malware spread like wildfire across the entire organisation.

You will also lose the software updates that maintain the reliability of Windows - such as new drivers for your hardware.

End-of-support also means that other software companies (e.g. accounts software, ERP programs, anti-virus) will stop supporting their software too on that platform. Basically it's the end of the road for Windows 7, Server 2008 and Small Business Server.

How can I tell if I have any of these versions?

If you recognise any of the below, you are using one of these versions.



Windows 7 Start Button

You are still using Windows 7 if the Start button in the bottom left of your PC screen is round and multi-coloured like this.



Exchange 2010 WebMail Login

Do you use webmail and does the login screen look like this?



SBS 2011 Remote Web Access Login

If you use the Remote Web Access in Small Business Server 2011, the login screen looks like this



Brown Outlook 2010 Icon

OK, maybe it is orange, but if it looks like this, you are using Office 2010

Does it affect my business?

If you have a fileserver that runs on Windows Server 2008 or Small Business Server, you need to plan on replacing this. This may involve buying or leasing a new fileserver, some cloud-based services, or a combination of a new server and cloud (a "hybrid" approach).



If you have PCs and laptops that run on Windows 7, you will need to either upgrade them to Windows 10 Professional or replace them. Depending on their age, replacing them may be a more sensible option.

Will I be able to use Windows 7 after support ends?

Even if you have an unsupported version, Windows will continue to work. You just won't be able to receive updates, security fixes or any support.

However, when Windows XP went out of support in 2014, it wasn't long before cyber criminals began to exploit the final version of the platform, which soon became a widespread problem. Malware can spread much more easily on obsolete platforms because, without security updates, known vulnerabilities will remain unpatched. As a result, it's crucial to move away from them as quickly as possible.



Are there any other issues?

Yes there are some other issues including:

- **No technical support from Microsoft** - customers will no longer be able to contact Microsoft to receive support on Server 2008 - related problems even in the event of business-critical incident or major downtime. Users may not be able to restore their system or recover any data or applications that are stored in the server. Many third-party IT support companies will be withdrawing support for Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 either immediately or from your next contract renewal.
- **Windows 7 is being left behind** for new software releases. For example, you can't install Office 2019 on Windows 7. It will not work.
- **Compliance issues** - organisations within some regulated industries are legally required to disclose their use of outdated software. There are reports that using Windows 7 and Server 2008 beyond January 2020 could lead to immediate failure of CyberEssentials and PCI (credit card payment) compliance. Many third-party applications will not support out of date software which can lead to a fail during compliance audits. We are also seeing reports that using Windows 7 beyond the end-of-life date will put you in breach of GDPR requirements.
- **Reduced third party support** - other third party hardware and software vendors such as anti-virus, accounting programs and backup software are likely to stop supporting their products on this platform too.
- **More costly to run** - the workloads and applications running on Server 2008 will become more expensive to manage and maintain. Operational expenses will increase as additional security will be required to keep data safe.
- **No benefits** - the opportunity to take immediate advantage of new IT infrastructure and application developments, management tools and cloud options will be lost.

Summary

It's the end of the road for Windows 7, Server 2008 and Microsoft Small Business Server in January 2020. You need to plan on replacing any affected fileserver(s) and any Windows 7 PCs or laptops you have, before the end of 2019.

Who are NCS IT Ltd

For 25 years, NCS have been making IT solutions simple. We pride ourselves on providing a bespoke service to businesses. We begin by understanding the specific requirements of each client and then build our recommendations to suit their needs.

Perfectly positioned to assist businesses across the UK from our base in Lancashire, NCS has built an enviable reputation for delivering first-class IT solutions, backed by solid support and easily accessible advice.

NCS are accredited to the current ISO IT Security Standard ISO:27001 and CyberEssentials Plus.

NCS are accredited by the following vendors:

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- VMware Partner
- Starwind Hyperconvergence Partner
- Sage Business Partner



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