

Software Licenses

When you purchase software such as Microsoft Office, Photoshop, Norton Anti-Virus, or any other software, including the Windows XP operating system, you are purchasing a license to use it on 1 computer and 1 computer only. The license is clearly stated on the package and also comes up on the screen when you install it.

Computer users have abused the licenses in the past by installing software on more than one computer as well as sharing it with friends, and even placing it on the Internet. This is happening both in homes and business use, and estimates place losses to software manufacturers in the billions.

Several software manufacturers have also reacted to this behavior, and safeguards are now placed or are being placed in newer software. Many methods have been tried over the years, but Microsoft and Symantec now have a system in place that prevents illegal use. This system is called “Activation”.

When Windows XP or Office XP, and even Norton Products are installed, you have 30 days to activate the product. In the case of Windows XP, the computer “dies” if you don’t activate it. If you have placed that software on a second computer, it will not activate, and that computer “dies” after the 30 original days. When it dies, your system is rendered useless until you purchase another copy and reinstall it. Everything on it is LOST. If you fail to activate Office, Office simply fails to load after the 30 days. There is nothing you can do except to purchase a new copy with a different license. Norton shuts down and you loose anti-virus protection.

There are some illegal copies of Windows XP out there that have the “activation” disabled, but they will not update with security and other fixes. Is that risk worth it? The manufacturers finally have a system to stop illegal copying and it works.

Activation for Microsoft requires either an Internet connection or telephone connection and is done swiftly by taking your software’s serial number and a “footprint” of your PC’s hardware and sends it to Microsoft’s server. Manual activation is possible with a phone call listing your serial number and computer details, and a code is given to unlock the “activation” procedure, but it must be done before 30 days are up or the computer “dies”.