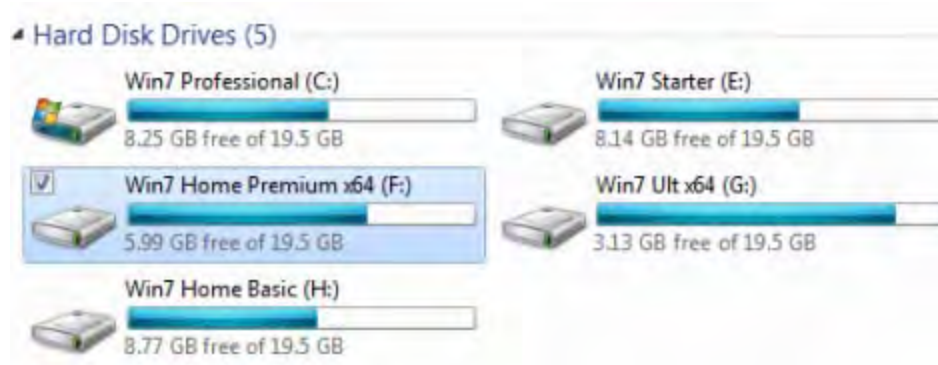


From Starter to Ultimate: What's really in each Windows 7 Edition?

79

Over the course of its Windows 7 development effort, Microsoft has been incredibly controlled about releasing details, pursuing an agonizingly deliberate disclosure plan. This week, they finally [announced the official release dates](#): RTM next month, on sale beginning October 22. The last remaining pieces of the puzzle? There's the price list, of course, which I don't think will be revealed publicly until close to the on-sale dates. The other missing detail is the exact breakdown of features in each edition.

I've been pestering contacts at Microsoft for an official features list for months, and they've politely but persistently refused every one of my requests. So, as part of the research for [Windows 7 Inside Out](#), I did the work myself. I installed copies of each Windows 7 edition from the Release Candidate (build 7100) code on a single machine, resulting in a five-way multiboot system. Then I tallied up which features were in each edition, trying out each one to see if I could identify unexpected behavior.



[Update 4-June noon PDT] Several people in comments complained that the original illustration I used above was hard to follow because I used different partition sizes. I was surprised to read that, because I had originally intended this screen shot to be an illustration showing that I had five operating systems installed

on a single system (on a single drive, in fact). I didn't realize that people would be interested in the numbers. So, dear readers, I went back and made those partitions identical in size and reshot the screen and uploaded it here and added this update. I installed a few utility applications in different partitions. For example, the Starter partition has Windows Live Essentials installed. None of the installed programs were large, but they do affect the numbers slightly.

If you're wondering why Ultimate is using about 3 GB more disk space than Home Premium, there's a simple answer. The Ultimate install is the original one for this system. Because it's an older installation it has many more automatic restore points saved. The newer Home Premium install has about 400 MB of volume shadow (restore point) space in use. The Ultimate install has 3.1 GB in use. The difference between those two values, 2.7 GB, almost exactly accounts for the difference in size. And no, I'm not going to reshoot this screen again!

[Update 4-June 10AM PDT, revised noon PDT] : Several people asked about the differing disk sizes in the original graphic above. I used a mix of x86 and x64 editions; 32-bit for Starter, Home Basic, and Professional, 64-bit for Home Premium and Ultimate. Disk space was a constant. For 32-bit editions, the disk footprint is around 11 GB; for 64-bit editions, disk space used is about 13 GB. Actual usage for you will depend on the amount of RAM installed (which dictates swap file size) and whether you've hibernated the machine and thus created a hibernation file, which will be the size of available RAM. The fact that all editions install all bits is what makes the [Anytime Upgrade](#) feature work so well. Hope that clarifies.]

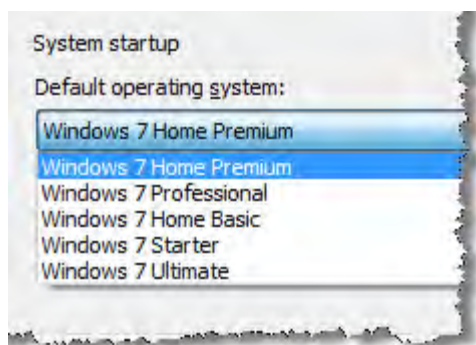
When I [did this exercise for Windows Vista](#) more than three years ago, I created tables to highlight the differences between editions. This time around, I decided that producing a monster feature table is the wrong way to present this information. Instead, in this post

I've created profiles for each edition and given each one its own page. I start with a master list of features common to all editions, followed by high-level feature lists that describe the unique features added with each upgrade level.

With Windows 7, Microsoft has actually put together a basic feature set that makes sense across the board with a consistent upgrade strategy to move between versions based on your requirements and your budget. That is a first for the company and a huge improvement over Microsoft's official Windows Vista feature list, which I once described as [“practically incomprehensible ... like a graduate thesis from the Rube Goldberg School of Business”](#). Every edition of Windows 7 contains all features of the previous edition, eliminating artificial divisions between consumer and business features. That makes the [Anytime Upgrade strategy](#) very clean and easy.

One caution in reading this post: Microsoft has already made at least one major change from the Windows 7 RC, dropping the [three-app limit from Windows Starter](#). It's possible they'll make other changes between now and RTM, so this list is subject to change.

Here's an executive summary, with links to more detailed pages



Common features

Windows 7 offers a fairly broad set of features across the board, with a lineup that is far more consistent than in Windows Vista or

Windows XP. This page contains a list of features you can count on being able to use in every edition.

Windows 7 Starter and Home Basic

Previously, Starter edition was known as “the one that wouldn’t let you use more than three apps at a time.” Fortunately, Microsoft reversed course on that one, and the final version of Windows 7 Starter should actually be capable of performing just about any Windows task. As long as you don’t want to watch a DVD or change your desktop background. Home Basic is the other “non-premium” edition, available only in emerging markets and not in the U.S., Europe, and other developed nations. It’s a little more interesting graphically than Starter, but lacks what Microsoft considers premium features like Windows Media Center.

Windows 7 Home Premium

This is the entry-level edition for most consumers. It has the full Aero interface, Windows Media Center, and a few interesting surprises depending on your hardware.

Windows 7 Professional

After a brief name change (to Business edition) in the Vista era, the preferred upgrade for businesses and enthusiasts returns to its roots, name-wise. The feature set is long and interesting, with the ability to run a Remote Desktop server, encrypt files, make network folders available offline, and join a Windows domain. Oh, and did I mention a licensed virtual copy of Windows XP for those one or two pesky legacy apps?

Windows 7 Ultimate/Enterprise

Two different names for essentially the same product. In the retail channel, Ultimate edition was perhaps the biggest marketing fiasco for Windows Vista, which is maybe why it’s being downplayed here. The biggest selling point is BitLocker disk encryption, which now works on USB flash drives as well.

Enterprise edition is the same product, packaged separately for volume license customers, who also get access to the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack.

Common features

The set of core features that goes into Windows 7 cuts across every edition, even the lowly Starter. Here's what you'll find in any edition that has the Windows 7 logo on it.

Shell/kernel: All of the tweaks that have given Windows 7 a generally positive reputation for snappy, responsive performance are in each edition, as the kernel is shared. If you access power management features, you'll find they're consistent in every edition. The Windows Search components are also shared with all editions.

User interface: Here's one place where you will find some bright lines between editions. A handful of shell enhancements are found in all editions: Aero Snap (move a window to the edge of the screen to resize it automatically), jump lists, and Desktop Gadgets are in every edition. The Aero interface—with its live taskbar previews, glass effects, and Flip3D—are missing from Starter edition. Home Basic uses the weird Windows Standard interface, which contains some Aero features (taskbar previews) but lacks the glass effects. Touch support is available only in the premium editions.

Included applications: Internet Explorer 8 is, of course, in every Windows 7 edition. (Note to the European Union: it can also be removed from every edition.) You'll find Ribbonized versions of Paint and WordPad, which are greatly improved over their predecessors, along with a slick new Calculator, in every edition. Surprisingly, the Windows Fax and Scan utility, previously available only in business editions, is now a consistent part of Windows 7, as is the high-end PowerShell scripting engine for administrators.

Security and reliability: Every feature in this category is available in all editions: Action Center, Resource Monitor, Windows Update, Windows Defender, Windows Firewall, and Parental Controls. The significantly less annoying update to User Account Control works the same in Starter as it does in Ultimate. Two huge changes in this category show that Microsoft really was listening to its critics: The Backup program provides full functionality in every edition, allowing you to create a system image and do file backups to an external hard drive or rewritable media (in Vista, system image backups were possible only in Business edition). In addition, the Previous Versions feature now works in all editions. This feature allows you to recover earlier versions of a file from automatic system restore points (Apple has a similar feature, slicker but less powerful, in Time Machine). Oh, and you can make a System Repair Disc any time with any edition.

Digital media: Windows Media Player 12 is included with all editions, including support for unprotected MPEG-4 (AAC) music files and QuickTime video (MOV) formats. Although Windows Media Player is capable of playing DVDs in every version, the feature depends on a DVD decoder, Because that component requires a royalty payment from Microsoft, it's only in the Windows 7 premium editions.

Networking: There are no apparent differences between editions in terms of the number of permitted SMB network connections; in practical terms, up to 10 PCs or devices can connect simultaneously to a Windows 7 client machine. The biggest difference between editions is the Remote Desktop feature, where all versions include the Remote Desktop client but only Professional and Ultimate/Enterprise editions can act as a Remote Desktop host. There are also minor differences in how different editions enable the new HomeGroup feature and major differences in domain connectivity.

Next: Has Starter edition gotten a bad rap? ->

Windows 7 Starter and Home Basic

Windows 7 Starter will be available worldwide, but you won't be able to buy a boxed edition or purchase it on a new desktop PC. Instead, Microsoft plans to authorize it for sale only when preinstalled by PC makers on new portable computers that [meet certain hardware standards](#), the most notable of which is rumored to be a maximum screen size of 10.2 inches, measured diagonally. Its primary purpose is to power small, light, inexpensive PCs popularly known as netbooks. It's available only in a 32-bit (x86) version; all other Windows 7 editions will be available in 32-bit and 64-bit packages.

User interface: Windows 7 Starter offers the Windows 7 Basic interface only. It lacks support for most effects in the Aero user experience, so you don't get glass on window borders or live thumbnails on the Windows taskbar, and there's no Aero Peek, only a Show Desktop button to minimize all open windows. Starter edition also offers only the barest menu of personalization features. In the RC builds, for example, there is no user-accessible way to change the desktop background or system sounds. (The idea, I guess, is that the screen on one of these systems is so small you'll always use maximized windows for running programs.) Despite the fact that Starter edition is available only on portable computers, it doesn't include the Windows Mobility Center, a convenient utility for managing notebook features.

Performance: Starter edition doesn't take up any less space on disk than its more expensive siblings, but I found that it uses less memory in operation. On my test notebook with 3GB of RAM, after I allowed the system to run for a period of time and chug through any scheduled tasks, it used 489MB of memory at idle. That's significantly less than the 594 MB that Professional edition required on the exact same system.

Digital media: As I noted in the Common Features section, Starter edition does most of what you'd expect from Windows Media Player. The noteworthy omission is lack of DVD support. You can rectify that by installing a third-party DVD player, which OEMs typically do on systems that include a DVD player. On a cheap netbook (sorry, I meant "small notebook PC") without an optical drive, it's likely you'll have to add that capability yourself before you can play MPEG-2 files.

As I noted in the introduction, the biggest change Microsoft has announced since it made the RC publicly available is the removal of the three-application limit for Starter edition. As I found when I tested it, that limit wasn't as dire as it sounded, but the experience was guaranteed to annoy and inconvenience the most vocal customers. So killing that restriction is a smart decision.

All in all, Windows 7 Starter is equivalent in functionality to Windows Vista Home Basic and Windows XP Home in terms of features. The most striking difference is the lack of personalization options for some UI elements. While that might seem like an odd and arbitrary feature to cut, it shouldn't be a dealbreaker for anyone. With the three-app limit now a non-issue, Starter edition should be a perfectly acceptable OS on small, cheap notebooks, regardless of how they're used.

And then there's Home Basic, which is, in my opinion, the oddest edition of them all. Windows Vista Home Basic was the entry-level edition in the lineup for customers in the U.S. and other major markets. In fact, it's been a [very popular choice among small business buyers](#), who don't need the fancy graphics or network features of higher-priced editions. Sorry, folks: Windows 7 Home Basic is available only in so-called emerging markets, at prices that make sense in those markets but would be insanely low if converted to US dollars, yen, or euros. Assuming it follows the [Vista Starter edition rules](#), it will not be available in the U.S. and

Canada, the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, and “other high income markets as defined by the World Bank.”

The user interface takes some explaining. With a name like Windows 7 Home Basic, you would expect it to use the Windows Basic interface, just like Starter edition. Right? Wrong. It uses the Windows 7 Standard interface, which is not available in any other edition. This UI offers a subset of Aero features: it lacks glass effects, for example, and doesn't offer Aero Peek, but it does provide live taskbar previews. It is distinctly more feature-rich than Starter edition, offering Windows Mobility Center and some personalization features, like the option to change the desktop background. It does permit Fast User Switching, but it specifically lacks many of the signature features of Windows 7 Home Premium, such as support for multitouch and Tablet PC hardware.

Windows 7 Home Basic also lacks the MPEG-2 decoder required to play DVDs in Windows Media Player (you'll need to supply that component separately) and does not offer Windows Media Center.

If you're ready to buy a new PC in Mexico, India, Brazil, or the People's Republic of China later this year—or, for that matter, in Namibia, Madagascar, Kyrgyz, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, or any of the dozens of other smaller countries where Microsoft will authorize it for sale—Home Basic will probably be your most economical Windows 7 option. Just be sure to set your expectations accordingly.

[Next: What's new in Home Premium edition? →](#)

Windows 7 Home Premium

If you walk into your local Best Buy (or PC World, for my readers in the U.K.) or visit an online vendor like Dell or HP, chances are you'll find Windows 7 Home Premium as the default choice on virtually every new desktop and notebook PC. Now that Home

Basic is no longer an option and Starter edition is restricted to tiny portable PCs, this is the new entry-level Windows . It will undoubtedly be installed on 70% or more of all PCs sold via retail outlets.

So, what's in it?

Shell/kernel: Home Premium allows you to switch to a second user account without logging off from the first one (a feature called Fast User Switching). That feature is unavailable in Starter edition. It also allows you to connect to multiple monitors and includes Windows Mobility Center, a central location for managing power, display, network, and other settings on a notebook PC.

User interface: You get the full Aero interface, including themes, glass borders, taskbar previews, Aero Peek, Flip 3D, Aero Shake, and desktop slide shows. Personalization features include a Control Panel for changing desktop backgrounds, window colors, and sound schemes; this same interface allows you to save these settings as a theme (for reuse on the same PC) or a theme pack (which can be shared with other computers).

Hardware support: Windows 7 Home Premium can address up to 16 GB of RAM (that requires a 64-bit edition, naturally). By comparison, a 64-bit edition of Windows 7 Home Basic is limited to 8 GB of RAM, and the 32-bit Starter edition is limited to 3.5 GB or less, depending on how much RAM is reserved by hardware. If you're planning to purchase a PC with a multitouch screen, this is the minimum Windows 7 edition you'll need; it has full support for multitouch and Tablet PC features.

Included applications: It's unlikely that anyone is going to choose this edition because of its extra applets. But if you must know, the utilities that you get here that aren't in lesser editions include the Snipping Tool (a nifty little screen-grab utility that debuted in Vista), Sticky Notes, and some premium games

(Chess Titans, Hearts, Internet Backgammon, Internet Checkers, Internet Spades, and Mahjong Titans.

Digital media: This category is where the premium features really kick in. If you're a fan of Windows 7 Media Center, you'll find it here. This is also the first edition in the Windows 7 family that allows you to stream media from Windows Media Player to other PCs or devices over a local network or over the Internet. Lesser editions can play streamed media but can't originate a stream. Windows DVD Maker is included in this edition, which also contains an MPEG-2 decoder for DVD playback.

Networking: If you use the new, Windows 7-only HomeGroup feature, you'll need at least one PC on your network running Home Premium or better. That's because lesser edition (Starter and Home Basic) can join an existing homegroup but can't create or manage one; for that task, you need Home Premium or better. If you want to join a Windows domain, you'll need to go up at least one more edition, though, as Home Premium doesn't do enterprise networks. Interestingly, this edition does include some well-hidden advanced networking features, including a full copy of Internet Information Services and Internet Connection Sharing.

[Next: Advanced networking and more in Professional edition](#) →

Windows 7 Professional

As you march up the ladder of Windows 7 editions, the feature lists get smaller with each step. That's because each edition contains all the features of the previous one. So for Windows 7 Professional, you get all the features in Home Premium, including Windows Media Center. That's a huge change over earlier Windows versions. With XP, for example, Media Center was part of its own separate edition, and there was no way to combine its features with those in XP Professional. With Windows Vista, if you wanted a mix of features from Home Premium and Business editions, you had to pay a frightful premium for Vista Ultimate

edition. I [called it a “ripoff”](#) back in 2006 and haven’t changed my opinion since then.

As you might guess from the name, the unique new features in Windows 7 Professional are aimed mostly at small businesses (and, to a lesser extent, enterprises). Here’s the list:

Advanced networking: If your network is built around a Windows domain, you need Professional edition or higher. This is the least expensive Windows 7 edition that can join a domain. This edition also includes the capability to allow Remote Desktop access to your computer from the network. There are other options, including third-party services like GoToMyPC and Microsoft’s own Live Mesh, but Remote Desktop works so well that it’s worth the premium, in my opinion.

Advanced file management: Offline Files is one of those hidden features that you probably don’t even know you need until you try it. By right-clicking a file or a folder on a network server and clicking Always Available Offline, you tell Windows to add that file or folder to your local cache, synchronize it when necessary, and index the cached files locally. The upshot is that your files are available even when your computer is disconnected from the network. (For a more detailed look at Offline Files, see [this post](#).) The other advanced feature found only in this edition is support for Encrypting File System, which enables strong encryption of files on NTFS-formatted volumes.

Backup to network: The Windows Backup program offers the same set of features in all editions. Professional edition adds the option to store backed-up files and system images to a network location instead of limiting you to local hard drives and removable media. This option has some limitations, though. The most notable one is that only a single system image can be stored on a network location. If you create a new system image, it replaces the old one. System images stored locally (on an external USB hard drive, for example) are much better for this task, because

they can store multiple incremental images, allowing you to store as many backups as the hard drive will hold.

Windows XP Mode: This feature is an add-on, still in beta, that includes a copy of Windows Virtual PC and a fully licensed copy of Windows XP Service Pack 3. It has some [strict \(and confusing\) hardware requirements](#), and in operation can be a little confusing. But it does its primary job just fine, which is to allow you to use an older application or USB-connected hardware device that isn't properly supported under Windows 7.

Presentation tools: If you live and die by PowerPoint, two features in this edition will be of interest to you. First is the Connect to Network Projector option, which allows you to mirror your portable PC's display on a projector connected to a wired or wireless network. The other is Presentation mode, an option in Windows Mobility Center that automatically kicks in when you connect to a projector and shuts down your instant messaging program, disables your screen saver, and suppresses system messages—all of the interruptions that professional presenters dread the most.

For businesses with domain networks, this is the only edition really worth considering. Enthusiasts will probably also find it attractive, if only for the Remote Desktop host capability.

[Next: Cleaning up Ultimate's bad reputation](#) →

Windows 7 Ultimate/Enterprise

As I mentioned earlier, Windows Vista Ultimate was probably the biggest marketing disaster to come out of the Windows Vista launch—and that's not an enviable list to be on top of. So it's not surprising that Microsoft is downplaying the Ultimate edition for consumers. In reality, most advanced Windows users will find everything they need in Windows 7 Professional.

The real target for this edition is enterprise customers, who get the same edition under a different name. Windows 7 Ultimate will be sold in retail channels, as boxed software and on new PCs; Windows 7 Enterprise is available to customers who purchase volume licenses. Both editions are functionally identical and include all features in Windows 7 Professional. In addition, you get these extra features:

BitLocker encryption: This feature has been around since Vista. BitLocker drive encryption allows an entire drive to be encrypted, protecting its contents from unauthorized access if the computer is lost or stolen. Windows 7 setup makes it easier to enable this encryption, because it automatically creates the required system partition as part of a clean installation. BitLocker To Go is a brand-new feature in Windows 7 that allows encryption of flash drives so that sensitive data isn't at risk if they're lost or stolen. (I wrote about BitLocker To Go last month as part of my [What to expect from Windows 7](#) feature.)

Boot from VHD: Every Windows 7 edition (even Starter) allows you to create and mount a Virtual Hard Drive (VHD) file using the built-in Disk Management tool. The Ultimate and Enterprise editions add the capability to boot from a VHD. Before you get too excited by this feature, try to imagine what you might use it for. Give up? Yeah, me too. Virtually every scenario in which this capability might come in handy can be handled just as easily using a traditional virtualization solution. This is a platform feature that will be useful someday. But not yet.

Language packs: If you check Windows Update right now using the RC version of Windows 7 Ultimate, you'll find more than 30 language packs waiting for you. These packs change the Windows 7 interface completely, allowing you to display menus, dialog boxes, and other elements in a language other than the base language your copy of Windows uses. If you use a lesser edition of Windows 7, you can always install a language input

pack, which translates about 80% of the Windows interface but leaves the remaining 20% in the base language. For multilingual Windows users, this could be a big deal.

Enterprise features: If your network includes a server running Windows Server 2008 R2, you can take advantage of a couple of interesting new features that only work in combination with Windows 7. BranchCache reportedly increases network responsiveness of applications and is designed for scenarios where an application is running on a server in the main office and workers in a branch office have to access it over a slow link. DirectAccess provides secure connections (without a VPN) between a client PC running Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 R2. Everyone I've talked to who has used this feature raves about it.

Location-aware printing: You have a notebook PC that's joined to a domain at work. When you come home, you want to connect to local resources. The purpose of this feature is to ensure that you find the correct printer based on your location. (It would be a shame to realize that you've just printed a resume and cover letter to a potential new employer on a shared printer back at the office where you currently work, wouldn't it?)

Security and Reliability: The most important addition here is a feature called AppLocker, which enables administrators of enterprise networks to create an authorized list of programs that users can install and run. You certainly wouldn't want to try this sort of aggressive whitelisting on your own PC, but in a high-security, tightly managed enterprise, it's a good way to make sure untrusted code never makes it onto a networked PC.

Availability

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Retail packaging			Yes	Yes	Ult. only
Can purchase electronically			Yes	Yes	Ult. only
Pricing: Full version			\$199.99	\$299.99	\$319.99 (Ult)
Pricing: Upgrade version			\$119.99	\$199.99	\$219.99 (Ult.)
Upgrade promotional pricing			\$49.99	\$99.99	
Bundled with new PCs in major markets		Yes	Yes	Yes	Ult. only
Windows Anytime Upgrade	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

User interface features

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Windows Basic UI		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Standard UI	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Aero UI ("Glass")			Yes	Yes	Yes
Aero Peek			Yes	Yes	Yes
Aero Snaps	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aero Shake			Yes	Yes	Yes
Aero Background			Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Flip	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Flip 3D			Yes	Yes	Yes
Live Taskbar Previews	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Live Preview (Explorer)			Yes	Yes	Yes
Jump Lists	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Search	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



Security features

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
--	------------	---------	--------------	--------------	-----------------------

More granular UAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Action Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Defender	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Firewall	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
IE 8 Protected Mode and DEP support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Update (can access Microsoft Update)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fast User Switching	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Parental Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Performance features

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Windows ReadyDrive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows ReadyBoost	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SuperFetch	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
64-bit processor support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physical processor support	1	1	2	2	2
Processor core support	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Max RAM (32-bit)	4 GB	4 GB	4 GB	4 GB	4 GB
Max RAM (64-bit)	8 GB	8 GB	16 GB	192 GB	192 GB

Reliability features

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Windows Backup	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
System image	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Backup to network				Yes	Yes
Encrypting File System (EFS)				Yes	Yes
BitLocker					Yes
BitLocker To Go					Yes
Automatic hard disk defragmentation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Previous Versions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create and attach (mount) VHD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Bundled applications

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Internet Explorer 8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Gadgets and Gallery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Games Explorer with basic games (FreeCell, Hearts, Minesweeper, Purple Palace, Solitaire, Spide Solitaire)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Premium games (Internet Backgammon, Internet Checkers, Internet Spades, Mahjong Titans)			Yes	Yes	Yes
Calculator	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paint	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Snipping Tool			Yes	Yes	Yes
Sticky Notes			Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Journal			Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Fax and Scan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows PowerShell and ISE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WordPad	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
XPS Viewer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Digital media and devices

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Windows Photo Viewer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Basic photo slide shows	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Media Player 12 with Play To	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows Media Player Remote Media Experience			Yes	Yes	Yes
MPEG-2 decoding			Yes	Yes	Yes
Dolby Digital compatibility			Yes	Yes	Yes
AAC and H.264 decoding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DVD playback			Yes	Yes	Yes
Can install MPEG-2 (DVD playback) add-in	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a
Windows Media Center			Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of TV tuners supported			4 of each type (analog, digital, etc.)	4 of each type (analog, digital, etc.)	4 of each type (analog, digital, etc.)
Windows DVD Maker			Yes	Yes	Yes
Device Stage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sync Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Networking features

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
SMB connections	20	20	20	20	20
Network and Sharing Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HomeGroup sharing	Join only	Join only	Yes	Yes	Yes

Improved power management	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connect to a Projector	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Remote Desktop	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Remote Desktop Host				Yes	Yes
IIS Web Server			Yes	Yes	Yes
RSS support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internet Connection Sharing	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Network Bridge	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Offline files				Yes	Yes

Mobility features

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Windows Mobility Center	Yes (No presentation mode)		Yes (No presentation mode)	Yes	Yes
Windows Sideshow (Auxilliary display)			Yes	Yes	Yes
Sync Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tablet PC functionality			Yes	Yes	Yes
Multi-Touch support			Yes	Yes	Yes

Enterprise features

	Home Basic	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Enterprise & Ultimate
Domain join (Windows Server)				Yes	Yes
XP Mode licensed				Yes	Yes
AppLocker					Yes
Boot from VHD					Yes
Branche Cache					Yes
DirectAccess					Yes
Federated Search (Enterprise Search Scopes)					Yes
Multilingual User Interface (MUI) Language Packs					Yes
Location-aware printing				Yes	Yes
Subsystem for UNIX-based Applications					Yes