

Microsoft Accounts

1. With Windows 10, when you first set up your new computer or install Windows 10 you have the choice of two types of Accounts: Microsoft Account or Local Account.
2. What is the Difference? The big difference between a Microsoft Account and a Local Account is that you use an email address instead of a username to log into the operating system.

A Microsoft account is a re-branding of any of previous accounts for Microsoft products. If you have ever used services like Hotmail, Outlook.com, or Skype, then you are sure to have a Microsoft account already. By re-branding and combining all these different accounts, Microsoft allows for complete integration of all their services into a single online account. This means that you can use it to get access to everything connected to the Microsoft ecosystem.

A Microsoft Account is Password Protected, which means that you cannot remove the password protection. You can only change it.

A Microsoft Account is also an Administrator Account, meaning it has full access to all the Operating Systems Resources.

Features that require a Microsoft Account

Windows 10, like Windows 8 before it, is integrated with Microsoft's online services. Microsoft would prefer you sign into Windows with your Microsoft account, although you can still create a local account. Certain features are only available if you sign in with a Microsoft account.

1. When you make significant hardware changes, such as replacing the motherboard or hard drive, Windows 10 won't be able to identify your computer correctly, and as a result, the operating system won't activate. Microsoft is now simplifying the process. Beginning with the Windows 10 Anniversary Update, you can link your Microsoft account (MSA) with the Windows 10 digital license on your device. The new feature allows you to access the Activation Troubleshooter quickly to re-activate your free upgrade copy of Windows 10.
2. Microsoft Store – You will need a Microsoft account to purchase paid

apps. Purchased apps are tied to a Microsoft account so you can re-download them on all your PCs.

3. One Drive - You won't be able to synchronise files with the OneDrive service built into File Explorer without a Microsoft account. Microsoft's cloud file storage tool works a lot like Dropbox or Google Drive. The files you store here are also available on the OneDrive website, OneDrive smartphone apps, and OneDrive clients for macOS and Windows 7.
4. Other syncing features require a Microsoft account, too. Windows can synchronize your desktop settings, including your background and color choices, between your PCs. Other apps like Microsoft Edge synchronize your favorites and other browser settings between your PCs. On Windows 10, you can see and manage which types of settings sync at Settings > Accounts > Sync Your Settings. On Windows 8, they're available at PC Settings > Sync Your Settings.
5. Initially, the Cortana personal assistant included with Windows 10 required a Microsoft account to function. In the Anniversary Update, Microsoft updated Cortana so it will function even if you're signed in with a local user account. However, many Cortana features rely on personalization and will only function if you use a Microsoft account. To make Cortana as powerful as possible, you have to leave the local user account behind.
6. Windows has "family" features that provide parental controls, allowing you to restrict and monitor what children can access. These require a Microsoft account. The Microsoft account also gives you access to an online dashboard where you can manage child account permissions and monitor usage information.
7. Device encryption, a feature introduced with Windows 8.1 that's still present on Windows 10, also requires you sign in with a Microsoft account. When you sign in with a Microsoft account on a new PC that supports device encryption, it will automatically encrypt your hard drive to protect your data. Anyone who rips out your PC's hard drive won't be able to access your files without the key. Windows only activates the encryption if you sign in with a Microsoft account. That's because Windows 10 will upload a recovery key to your Microsoft account online, ensuring average PC users who forget their passwords can still access their files. Windows won't encrypt your hard drive if you sign in with a local user account. People would forget their passwords and complain to

Microsoft that they can't access their files. If you want to encrypt files with a local user account, you'll need the BitLocker encryption feature that's only available on Professional editions of Windows.

8. Microsoft is continuing to add new features that depend on a Microsoft account to Windows 10. Windows 10's November Update added a "Find My Device" feature for portable PCs, allowing you to track a stolen or lost PC if you set this up ahead of time. This feature requires a Microsoft account. Microsoft provides a "Your devices" website where you can track the location of your lost PC. Just click the "Find my device" link next to the device you want to track.
9. A Microsoft account also allows you to configure a two-step verification system of your identity each time you sign in. This requires you to enter a security code each time you sign into a device that is not on your trusted list.