

Windows 10 Information

Read This Before Installing Windows 10

(or even if you don't want to)

Microsoft is currently engaged in an unprecedented hard-sell campaign to push rapid adoption of Windows 10 by existing users of Win 7 and 8. This includes a series of nagware popups urging you to "Get Windows 10" being stealth installed on Window 7 and 8 devices in the guise of bug fixes and security updates by Windows Update.

More recently, Microsoft has actually been stealth-downloading *gigabytes* of install files for Windows 10 onto Win7 and Win8 systems without warning or permission. (This can completely fill up the remaining free space on low-end Windows 8.1 tablets with 1 or 2 GB of flash memory, rendering them completely unusable.) In a few instances, MS has actually launched the Win 10 install without warning or permission.

1. Win 10 is the last discrete version of Windows ever. From now on, it will be continually and endlessly changing with silent FORCED updates done without your knowledge or consent.

Unlike previous versions of Windows, where Window Update would present a list of patches and let you pick and choose which ones to apply (and undo if they caused problems), Win 10 just silently forces changes into your system. This would be great **--IF--** MS didn't have such a horrible record of botched updates. In just the FIRST week of Win 10 release, there have been three major screwups that have bricked just-installed Win 10 installations. One driver update for certain video chips locked machines into endless reboots, and one totally killed many machines rendering them unable to boot at all.

This continual unannounced changing of Win 10 means you are dealing with an unknown endlessly moving target. Just because programs and device drivers worked today, there is no assurance they will work tomorrow, next week or next month, due to the endless stealth updates.

This is going to be especially significant with ham radio software because much of it hasn't changed significantly since the XP era of the mid-to late

2000's. Sooner or later some secret update will start breaking these elderly programs, with no recourse to uninstall the offending patch (if you can even identify it).

2. Win 10 has escalated invasion of privacy to an unprecedented level. Win 10 is far more "cloud-oriented" than previous versions of Windows. As part of this, it's embedded "telemetry" reports practically everything you do, every program you run, every file you open back to the MS mother ship for analysis and marketing purposes. It shares your WiFi passwords with friends on your contact list. It contains hooks to pop up ads in the middle of LOCALLY RUNNING programs. It attempts to default file saves of local programs to Microsoft's cloud, rather than to your own hard disk. It tries to thwart downloads of browsers other than Edge;i.e. that can run adblocker and popup-blocker plug-ins. It ignores entries in the Windows HOSTS file aimed at blocking unwanted communications to specific URLs. MS has taken it upon itself to scan your local files to determine which of your BitTorrent downloads and installed programs are "illegal".

For Win 7, 8 or 10, the "telemetry" modules "phone home" to these domains at Microsoft:

vortex.data.microsoft.com
vortex-win.data.microsoft.com
telecommand.telemetry.microsoft.com
telecommand.telemetry.microsoft.com.nsatc.net
oca.telemetry.microsoft.com
oca.telemetry.microsoft.com.nsatc.net
sqm.telemetry.microsoft.com
sqm.telemetry.microsoft.com.nsatc.net
watson.telemetry.microsoft.com
watson.telemetry.microsoft.com.nsatc.net
redir.metaservices.microsoft.com
choice.microsoft.com
choice.microsoft.com.nsatc.net
df.telemetry.microsoft.com
reports.wes.df.telemetry.microsoft.com
wes.df.telemetry.microsoft.com
services.wes.df.telemetry.microsoft.com
sqm.df.telemetry.microsoft.com
telemetry.microsoft.com
watson.ppe.telemetry.microsoft.com
telemetry.appex.bing.net
telemetry.urs.microsoft.com
telemetry.appex.bing.net:443
settings-sandbox.data.microsoft.com
vortex-sandbox.data.microsoft.com
survey.watson.microsoft.com

watson.live.com
watson.microsoft.com
statsfe2.ws.microsoft.com
corpext.msitadfs.glbdns2.microsoft.com
compatexchange.cloudapp.net
cs1.wpc.v0cdn.net
a-0001.a-msedge.net
statsfe2.update.microsoft.com.akadns.net
sls.update.microsoft.com.akadns.net
fe2.update.microsoft.com.akadns.net
diagnostics.support.microsoft.com
corp.sts.microsoft.com
statsfe1.ws.microsoft.com
pre.footprintpredict.com
i1.services.social.microsoft.com
i1.services.social.microsoft.com.nsatc.net
feedback.windows.com
feedback.microsoft-hohm.com
feedback.search.microsoft.com
rad.msn.com
preview.msn.com
ad.doubleclick.net
ads.msn.com
ads1.msads.net
ads1.msn.com
a.ads1.msn.com
a.ads2.msn.com
adnexus.net
adnxs.com
az361816.vo.msecnd.net
az512334.vo.msecnd.net

(There may be others not yet uncovered)

List is from "Destroy Windows 10 Spying 1.6 Build 711" at
MajorGeeks.com

<http://www.majorgeeks.com/files/details/destroy_windows_10_spying.html>

Many of these URLs are hard-coded in the communications modules. You can't stop or "black-hole" them with entries in the HOSTS file, or with firewalls running on the same computer. Blocking them requires entries outside the PC in your router's block list.

<[BGR - Windows 10 is spying on almost everything you do – here's how to opt out](#)>

<BGR - Latest update reenables Windows 10's spying features – here's how to stop it>

3. **MS is now attempting to stealth-load the same telemetry "spyware" into Win 7 and Win 8 systems under the guise of important "Customer Experience Improvement Program" (a.k.a. CEIP) patches by Windows Update. However, at least with Win7 and 8 you can see the list of proposed downloads BEFORE they download, and uncheck them. Further, there are simple third-party batch file tools that can scan and uninstall this unwanted invasive crapware, including the "Get Windows 10" nagware popups campaign.)**
4. Further, MS has started stealth-downloading the ***ENTIRE*** Win 10 setup image (i.e. multi-gigabyte DVD image) into Win 7 & 8 systems, whether you asked for it or not, "just in case you decide to upgrade". It's stealing gigabytes of your disk space and blowing through wireless device data quotas.

See

<http://www.theregister.co.uk/2015/09/10/windows_10_forced_download/> (This is a British computer and IT news site)

5. As of late Novmber, Microsoft has been re-intensifying their effort to *force* Windows 10 upgrade "nagware" into Windows 7 & 8 systems. They have been caught repeatedly using Windows updates to cancel "Do not upgrade OS" flags in existing Win 7 and 8 systems (set by users using the tools below). See this 7 December 2015 article from Computer World: "**Microsoft sets stage for massive Windows 10 upgrade strategy**". Note also the three other stories about these forced upgrades linked in the right-hand sidebar of this story.
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The trojan horse "patch" to Windows 7 and 8 that starts this assault is Windows Update

"KB3035583" a.k.a. "GWX" (Get Windows X a.k.a. Windows 10) .

The first sign you have been hit with this unwanted crapware is the appearance of a white Windows logo in the system tray in the lower-right corner of the Windows desktop on Win 7 and 8 systems. An incessant series of popups urging you to update will follow.

If you have already been hit with the GWX nagware and possible installs of Win10-style "telemetry", you can un-install them with the following .CMD file (i.e. Windows version of a classic DOS "batch file").

Open a blank document in Windows Notepad or similar editor. Copy/paste the following lines into it. Save the file as "**Zap-Win10-Updates.CMD**" or some such. Note the file extension ".CMD" rather than the default ".TXT" . After the save, locate this file in the Windows Explorer, RIGHT-click it and "Run As Administrator". After a couple of UAC "Are you sure" prompts, a black "DOS Box" window will open. You will be repeatedly asked to "Hit any key to continue". Just keep hitting <ENTER> until the black window closes; then reboot.

```
@ECHO off
ECHO .
ECHO This batch file removes several Windows 10-inspired
ECHO spyware a.k.a. "telemetry" components stealth-
ECHO installed into Windows 7 and 8 systems under the
ECHO guise of Windows security patches by Windows Update.
ECHO .
ECHO It also removes the "Upgrade to Windows 10 "nagware"
ECHO KB 3035583.
ECHO .
ECHO Hit ENTER to continue after each pause.
ECHO .
ECHO This batch file must be run with administrator
ECHO privileges; i.e. right-click this file and
ECHO "Run As Administrator". Reboot system after final
ECHO uninstall runs and black command window closes.
ECHO .
ECHO on
pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:3035583 /norestart
pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:2990214 /norestart
pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:2952664 /norestart
pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:3022345 /norestart
```

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pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:3068708 /norestart
pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:3075249 /norestart
pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:3080149 /norestart
pause
wusa /uninstall /kb:3044374 /norestart
pause
ECHO Last Uninstall, Reboot Now!
Pause
```

After the uninstalls complete, look for the subdirectory (i.e. "folder") called **\\$Windows.~BT** located off the root of the same drive as Windows. You will need to have "Show Hidden Files" enabled in the Explorer to see it. If found, delete it and its contents. (This is the location where the stealth download of the entire Windows 10 installer is being placed, eating up gigabytes of your disk space.) This directory will contain a layout equivalent to a Windows 10 install DVD-ROM and will be somewhere between 3 and 6 GB.

You may encounter Windows protection issues that prevent you from deleting the directory and/or contents. If so, reboot to Windows Safe Mode, or boot from an external utilities CD using Win PE or @ActiveBootDiskl.

You can "immunize" Win 7 and 8 against these unwanted downloads and prevent the deleted files "coming back from the dead" with the next Windows Update.

Download the freeware "**GWX Control Panel**" that allows you to remove existing nagware and block unwanted Windows 10 downloads here:

<<http://blog.ultimateoutsider.com/2015/08/using-gwx-stopper-to-permanently-remove.html>>

Note that this tool has undergone repeated updates and revisions every few weeks as Microsoft has become ever more aggressive and evasive about their coercive forced-upgrade tactics.

You can create your own registry entries:

Open Windows Notepad and copy & paste the text below into the open window. Then save it with a name ending in **.REG** such as

Stop-Windows-10-Nags-and-Forced-Updates.reg

Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00

;Created by Vishal Gupta for AskVG.com

;Updated by WA8LMF 23 Nov 2015 as per Windows Secrets of 19 Nov 2015

[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\WindowsUpdate]

"DisableOSUpgrade"=dword:00000001

[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\GWX]

"DisableGWX"=dword:00000001

[HKEY_Local_Machine\software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\WindowsUpdate\OSUpgrade]

"ReservationsAllowed"=dword:00000000

This is a Windows registry entry. Locate the saved file in the Windows File Explorer. Right-click it and choose "Merge" to read it into the Windows Registry. Then reboot the system to make it effective.

Or disable Windows Update entirely, and use the off-line AutoPatcher patching system for Win 7 and 8.1, available from <<http://autopatcher.net>> . AutoPatcher downloads the entire set of patches and updates for a given version of Windows, stores them locally on your hard disk or removable storage device. You can then update any number of PCs without an Internet connection. When run, Autopatcher presents a list of ALL patches issued for a given 32- or 64-bit version

of Windows, indicates which ones are already installed, and lets you opt in or out of any that need to be installed.

After each month's "Patch Tuesday" release of new patches, AutoPatcher can update your local collection. The Autopatcher scripts pointedly leave out the "Get Windows 10" nagware and spyware installer "patches".

Finally, check Windows Task Scheduler and remove "DoScheduledTelemetryRun", "Microsoft Compatibility Appraiser" and "ProgramDataUpdater" if they exist.

Some of the information on this page came from:

<<http://www.infoworld.com/article/2911609/operating-systems/kb-2952664-compatibility-update-for-win7-triggers-unexpected-daily-telemetry-run-may-be-snooping.html>>

<<https://www.yahoo.com/tech/s/not-just-windows-10-windows-7-8-tracking-162550762.html>>

<<https://bgr.com/2015/07/31/windows-10-upgrade-spying-how-to-opt-out/>>

<[BGR - Windows 10 is spying on almost everything you do – here's how to opt out](#)>

<[BGR - Latest update reenables Windows 10's spying features – here's how to stop it](#)>

<http://www.theregister.co.uk/2015/09/10/windows_10_forced_download/>

<http://www.majorgeeks.com/files/details/remove_windows_nag_icon_to_upgrade_to_windows_10.html>

<<http://www.ghacks.net/2015/08/28/microsoft-intensifies-data-collection-on-windows-7-and-8-systems/>>

<<<http://windowssecrets.com/newsletter/windows-10-gets-its-first-big-update/>>

(Scroll down to, or search for, "[Blocking the upgrade by editing the Registry](#)".

<<http://www.computerworld.com/article/3012278/microsoft-windows/microsoft-sets-stage-for-massive-windows-10-upgrade-strategy.html>>

<<http://blog.ultimateoutsider.com/2015/08/using-gwx-stopper-to-permanently-remove.html>>