

Product Keys

Microsoft products fall into one of three categories with regards to product keys. If you click on the two links below it will direct you to instructions on how and where to obtain your keys.

Key code Not Required to Install—Installation can commence without entering a product key of any kind. Example: SQL

Setup Key Required: Product key required is not unique to your organization, but must be entered to begin installation. Examples: Visio Pro 2010, Exchange Server Standard and Pro

Volume License Key Required: Either a MAK, KMS, or standard VLK is required to install your product. Examples: Office, Windows Server, Windows Desktop OS.

The following website can help you determine the type of key (if any) needed to install your product:

<http://www.microsoft.com/licensing/existing-customers/product-activation.aspx>

The screenshot shows the '1. Find Products' section of the Microsoft licensing website. It features a search box labeled 'Search for Products:' with a green arrow button. Below the search box is the text 'Or' and 'Browse Categories:' followed by four icons representing 'Applications', 'More', 'Systems', and 'Servers'. A yellow highlighted note states: 'Note: Not all Volume Licensing products require a key. If a product is not listed, no key is required.' Two callout boxes provide additional instructions: one says 'Search for your product by name...' pointing to the search box, and another says '...Or click one of these options and choose your product from the corresponding list' pointing to the category icons.

Where to Find a Setup Key

Setup keys are not unique to your organization. They are located on the media download page for the product. The example below is for Exchange Server standard, but all products requiring a Setup Key will have it located in the same place:

Select Download Settings	
Product:	Exchange Server Enterprise 2010 with Service Pack 1
Version:	2010
Language:	-- Select One --
Operating System Type:	-- Select One --
Connection Speed:	T1 (1.5M)
Special Instructions:	Setup Key: GVMTV-GMXWH-C234M-8FMWP-TFPFP

Volume License Keys (VLK, KMS and MAK)

All Volume License Keys are found on the VLSC via the following process:

Sign into the VLSC (<https://www.microsoft.com/licensing/servicecenter/Home.aspx>)



Mouse over “Licenses” and click on “Relationship Summary.”

Find your license in the far-left column. Note: The license numbers are in date order, with the oldest being first, so you may need to scroll down to find it.

Click on the license number.

On the tabs across the middle, find the one marked “Product Keys” and click on it.

Your complete suite of product keys will be listed here.

What is a Volume License Key

Volume License Keys are your traditional 25 digit alpha-numeric key codes used to install older versions of Microsoft products. There are no limits on use and you only need to enter the key code once to complete installation. These key codes are unique to your organization and located on your key code page.

What is Key Management Service (KMS) and how does it work?

KMS is a lightweight service that does not require a dedicated system and can easily be co-hosted on a system that provides other services. With KMS, you can complete activations on your local network, eliminating the need for individual computers to connect to Microsoft for product activation.

A KMS host key is used only to activate the KMS host with a Microsoft activation server. A KMS host key can activate six KMS hosts with 10 activations per host. Each host can activate an unlimited number of computers. If you have an existing machine configured as Windows KMS* host, you will need to enter and activate the Office 2010 KMS host key before the KMS host can activate Office 2010, Project 2010, and Visio 2010. If you need additional KMS activations so you may activate more than 6 KMS hosts, [find the telephone number for your Microsoft Activation Center](#) to activate your KMS host.

KMS requires a minimum number of either physical or virtual computers in a network environment. These minimums, called activation thresholds, are set so that they are easily met by enterprise customers. For computers running:

- **Windows Server 2008** and **Windows Server 2008 R2** you must have at least five (5) computers to activate.
- **Windows Vista** or **Windows 7** you must have at least twenty-five (25) computers to activate. These thresholds can be a mix of server and client machines to make up the threshold number.
- For **Office 2010**, **Project 2010** and **Visio 2010** you must have at least five (5) computers to activate. If you have deployed Microsoft Office 2010 products, including Project 2010 and Visio 2010, you must have at least five (5) computers running Office 2010, Project 2010 or Visio 2010.

Here are some more reference materials to assist you:

- For Activation thresholds, please see the [Volume Activation Planning Guide](#).
- For Office 2010, Project 2010, and Visio 2010 please see [Volume Activation Quick Start Guide for Office 2010](#), and [Overview of Volume Activation for Office 2010](#).
- Read more details about the [product activation process and the specific products that use Volume Activation](#).

What is a Multiple Activation Key (MAK) and how does it work?

A Multiple Activation Key (MAK) requires computers to connect one time to a Microsoft activation server. Once computers are activated, no further communication with Microsoft is required. There are two activation methods for MAK:

- MAK Independent Activation: Each computer individually connects to Microsoft via the Web or telephone to complete activation.
- MAK Proxy Activation: [This method uses the Volume Activation Management Tool \(VAMT\), which is part of the Windows 7 Automated Installation Kit \(WAIK\)](#). One centralized activation request is made on behalf of multiple computers with one connection to Microsoft online or by telephone.
Note: VAMT enables IT professionals to automate and centrally manage the volume activation process using a MAK.

Each MAK has a predetermined number of allowed activations, based on your Volume Licensing agreement. To increase your MAK activation limit, please contact your [Microsoft Activation Center](#).

Read more details about [product activation for products using Volume Activation](#).