To-Business Decision Makers Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. How do I know which product edition is right for me?

Microsoft provides an interactive server selection tool that requires you to answer a few online questions to receive a server recommendation. Below are some descriptions of the editions.

Foundation

Windows Server 2012 Foundation provides a Windows Server experience for up to 15 users. Windows Server 2012 Foundation provides the core IT resources of Windows Server 2012, such as file and print sharing, remote access, and security. It provides a network foundation from which you can centrally manage settings on your computers that are based on the Windows operating system, and upon which you can run the most popular business applications. It also provides a familiar Windows Server user experience that lets you manage users and helps safeguard business information.

Windows Server 2012 Foundation is available via OEM licensing on new server hardware from all leading manufacturers and their distribution channel. Windows Server 2012 Foundation is supported by an extensive network of certified professionals who can provide service for your Windows Server network.

Essentials

Windows Server 2012 Essentials is the ideal first server for small businesses with up to 25 users. It provides a cost-effective and easy-to-use solution to help protect data, organize and access business information from virtually anywhere, support the applications needed to run a business, and quickly connect to critical cloud services such as email and backup. It also provides a familiar Windows Server user experience that helps you manage users and safeguard business information via scripting or a graphical user interface.

Windows Server 2012 Essentials can help to minimize the time, effort, and money that you spend on IT. This enables small organizations to focus on their core business, not on managing an IT infrastructure.

Standard

Windows Server 2012 Standard is designed for physical or minimally virtualized environments. With continuously available and an easy-to-manage multiple-server platform, Windows Server 2012 offers excellent economics and breakthrough efficiency. It also provides a familiar Windows Server user experience that helps you manage users and safeguard business information via scripting or a graphical user interface. Windows Server 2012 is a broad, scalable, and elastic server platform that gives organizations the flexibility to build and deploy applications and websites on-premises, in the cloud, and in a hybrid environment, using a consistent set of tools and frameworks.

Windows Server 2012 empowers IT managers to provide users with flexible access to data and applications from virtually anywhere, on virtually any device, with a rich user experience, while simplifying management and helping maintain security, control, and compliance.

Datacenter

Windows Server 2012 Datacenter is designed for highly virtualized private cloud environments. Windows Server 2012 Datacenter can help many organizations achieve large scale benefits such as improved utilization, reduced power costs and reduced floor space requirements. You can add highly agile and flexible services with private and public cloud solutions together with System Center 2012.

Whether you want to virtualize, build a private cloud, scale your services through a public cloud, or mix all three, the virtualization and management solutions in Windows Server 2012 Datacenter can help you better manage your datacenter today and accelerate your journey towards cloud computing.

System Center

Microsoft System Center 2012 is a comprehensive management platform that enables you to more easily and efficiently manage your IT environments, including your server infrastructure and client devices. With System Center 2012, you get the most cost effective and flexible platform for managing your traditional datacenters, private and public clouds, client computers and mobile devices.

System Center 2012 is the only unified management platform where you can manage multiple hypervisors, physical resources, and applications in a single offering, versus multiple fragmented point solutions.

Q2. My current solution works fine. Why should I spend more to modernize my IT environment?

Upgrading your aging servers and operating systems can reduce costs and provide significant benefits that can easily outweigh any cost of upgrading.

If you're running Windows Server 2003, you're running 10 year old technology. Substantial improvements have been made in those 10 years that help businesses compete better in today's marketplace.

Outdated servers can be inefficient to run and more expensive to maintain. Upgrading to Windows Server 2012 allows you to modernize and standardize your IT infrastructure and consolidate servers. Results can include:

- Reduced operational costs and increased efficiencies
- Improved employee productivity
- Ability to be cloud-ready
- Increased business agility and ability to scale to accommodate business growth
- Improved system availability
- Ability to implement cost-effective backup and disaster recovery solutions

Mainstream Support from Microsoft for Windows Server 2003 ended in July 2010. [1]

Q3. Can I migrate my current Windows Server 2003 environment to Windows Server 2012?

Yes. Microsoft provides several resources to help with application migration and planning. For additional information on application migration, the following resources are available:

Provides info about new features Windows Server 2012 operating system and guidelines regarding compatibility with existing programs	Windows Server 2012 Compatibility Cookbook
Helps test applications for compatibility with latest technologies and platforms from Microsoft	Microsoft Platform Ready Test Tool
Helps verify compatibility and security issues, evaluate third party applications and test line of business applications	Windows Server App Certification Kit
An automated inventory and assessment tool to help with migration projects and virtualization deployments.	Microsoft Assessment and Planning Toolkit

Q4. Will my apps work on Windows Server 2012?

The majority of applications that run on Windows Server 2008 and 2008 R2 should work on Windows Server 2012 with no changes. (See table in Q3 above for resources to check compatibility.)

Alternatively, you are licensed to continue to run virtual instances of Windows Server 2003 on Windows Server 2012, if desired.

Q5. What is Virtualization?

Virtualization is a method of running multiple independent virtual operating systems on a single physical computer. It is a way of maximizing physical resources to maximize the investment in hardware.

[1] Microsoft lifecycle support: www.microsoft.com/lifecycle; At this time, Microsoft only provides security updates for Windows Server 2003 this does not include other fixes or updates. Microsoft will end all support, including security updates, on July 14, 2015.

Q6. What is the benefit to me and my business of virtualizing?

With virtualization, you can increase business capacity at a lower cost, reduce energy costs, and have an IT platform that can easily scale as business needs evolve.

The top five benefits of virtualizing are:

1. Reduce hardware maintenance costs because of a lower number of physical servers
2. Increase the space utilization efficiency in your data center
3. Helps prevent one application from impacting another application when upgrades or changes are made
4. Speed up server deployment
5. Deploy multiple operating system technologies on a single hardware platform

Q7. Why should I use a Microsoft solution for virtualization?

Microsoft virtualization gives you a cost-effective, easy-to-manage solution to help drive down the cost of doing business—offering an immediate return on a relatively small investment and extending your current hardware investments. Features that were previously only available and affordable to large enterprise are now accessible, affordable and easy to deploy for small and growing businesses.

Live migration and clustering are included at no cost. With Windows Server 2012, virtualization is built into the product through a server role called Hyper-V. This means you can easily integrate it with your existing infrastructure and management tools. Since Hyper-V is the "Windows you know," you can use the in-house expertise you already have. In fact, if you know Windows, you know virtualization.

Hyper-V is built in so you don't have to spend valuable resources and time on learning a new skill set. There's no need to dedicate specialized IT staff to manage Hyper-V.

(Microsoft Hyper-V is a native hypervisor, or virtual machine manager, that enables platform virtualization on x86-64 systems.)

Q8. Windows Server 2012 just launched. Shouldn't I wait until the product has been out in the market for a while before I buy?

Windows Server 2012 has been tested extensively. In fact there were over 500,000 pre-release downloads and 200 customers participated in Microsoft's early deployment program. In addition, Microsoft is so confident with Windows Server 2012 that Microsoft itself is running mission critical platforms like Bing on it.

To-Partner Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What is the size of the opportunity for upgrading the Windows Server installed base?

Worldwide, 57% of the installed base of x86 servers – a total of about 13 million servers – are still running Windows Server 2003.

Q2. When will Microsoft stop supporting Windows Server 2003?

For both Windows Server 2003 and Windows Server 2003R2, per Microsoft lifecycle support (www.microsoft.com/lifecycle):

- Microsoft ended Mainstream Support over 2 years ago on July 13, 2010.
- At this time, Microsoft will only do security updates, but no other fixes or updates.
- Microsoft will end all support, including security updates, on July 14, 2015.

Q3. How much testing has been done so my customers can feel confident their apps will work?

Certified for Windows Server 2012 applications have been tested by Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) using technical specifications and tools required by Microsoft. ISVs have independently verified the compatibility of such applications and confirmed support to customers that deploy the certified applications. The Certified for Windows Server 2012 logo indicates hardware and software solutions that meet Microsoft standards for compatibility and recommended practices with the Windows Server 2012 operating system. Solutions that have earned the Certified for Windows Server 2012 are also fully supported in Hyper-V environments.

Click here to see whether your hardware and software solutions are Certified for Windows Server 2012.

Q4. Can a customer still maintain a Windows Server 2003 environment with a Windows Server 2012 license?

Yes. A license for a current Microsoft server OS – either Windows Server 2008 R2 or Windows Server 2012 – includes the right to use a downgrade version of Windows Server, including Windows Server 2003. Note that the downgrade Windows Server 2003 would be used under terms of the new license, which means that all users or devices accessing the server would need Windows Server CALs corresponding to the current OS license (that is, either Windows Server 2008 R2 CALs or Windows Server 2012 CALs.) For Windows Server 2012, CALs are required for access to any Windows Server 2012 Datacenter or Standard instance (physical or virtual). *Note: Microsoft no longer sells Windows Server 2003 licenses through any channel.*

Q5. How can a customer get downgrade media and a product key for Windows Server 2003?

Neither Microsoft nor Microsoft's channel partners can provide downgrade media/key for Windows Server 2003. This is true for both VL and OEM license types. At this time, since Windows Server 2003 is out of Mainstream support, a customer may only re-use previously licensed Windows Server 2003 media and key when exercising downgrade rights for a new Windows Server 2008 R2 or Windows Server 2012 license for the same or higher level edition.

Q6. How can Windows Server 2003 services such as Active Directory and Remote Access be migrated to a new Windows Server 2012 server?

Windows Server 2012 includes updated Windows Server Migration Tools which can migrate roles and services from either 32-bit or 64-bit versions of Windows Server 2003/Windows Server 2003 R2 to a new Windows Server 2012 server.

Q7. Will Windows Server 2012 run Windows Server 2003/Windows Server 2003R2 applications?

In many cases, applications written for Windows Server 2003/Windows Server 2003 R2 which do not include custom drivers or other "kernel-mode" programming may run the same in Windows Server 2012. However, always check with the application developer or ISV vendor for your business applications to assure you are testing and using the most current version. To help with compatibility testing, Microsoft offers a free Platform Ready Test Tool as part of the Microsoft Windows Logo Program for Server Applications.

Q8. How can Windows Server 2003 application workload be moved to a virtual machine to run on Windows Server 2012?

To transfer "physical to virtual" or "P2V", the Window Server 2003 boot volume containing all installed applications must be converted to a "VHD" file to run on the Hyper-V hypervisor in Windows Server 2008 R2 or Windows Server 2012. This

could be done by Microsoft System Center, or by other commercially available software tools. Alternatively, the customer could use a free tool such as "Disk2vhd", available at http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/ee656415. Any data not local to the machine when the physical to virtual machine was created will need to be made available to the new virtual machine.

Q9. Does Windows Server 2008 R2 or Windows Server 2012 running a Windows Server 2003 virtual machine need to be activated with a Windows Server 2003 product key?

Yes, only the first time the Windows Server 2003 VM is run, it would need to be activated by entering a previously licensed Windows Server 2003 product key. If the server did not have internet access, or if that Windows Server 2003 product key had reached its maximum activation limit, then the customer would be prompted to call a Microsoft Activation Center. Once they explained to the Activation Center analyst that they were re-using the key under downgrade rights for a new license, the analyst would help them activate the VM instance.