

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Product Activation?

Product activation is a software-based license management technology incorporated into many Autodesk products. It is a secure and hassle-free process that authenticates licensed users running Autodesk software. The process verifies that the serial number is legitimate and has not been activated on more computers than are eligible. It does not affect the ability of licensed users to use their software the way they have always done. It is similar to the activation mechanism in Autodesk products in the past but provides additional capabilities for security and new sales models.

1.2 What happens during Product Activation?

Product activation is a series of simple steps that takes place during the start-up of your Autodesk software. Users transmit their serial number and registration data, which is authenticated with the Autodesk back-office system to activate the product. The entire activation and registration process is quick and easy, and the majority of users will experience the process only once.

1.3 How does Product Activation work?

The activation process uses minimal information about the software and computer to create a request for a product license.

The activation request is composed of the software serial number, product version and language. In addition, a machine ID and request codes are created. The machine ID is a 64-bit randomly computed value and cannot be used to identify the make or model of your computer or any of its components. The machine ID is then embedded within the request code.

The request code is a unique number that is generated by the activation technology and is required, along with a serial number, for product registration and activation. The request code is displayed next to the serial number in the Register Today interface within the software. The request code is used to identify an individual activation request and contains no other information about the product or hardware.

The activation request is sent to Autodesk either through a secure Internet connection or via email. If the request is valid, a valid activation code is returned that enables the product immediately.

1.4 Does this mean I can't use the product on my desktop and laptop? How many activations are permitted per license?

Autodesk recognizes you may sometimes need to operate the software when you are away from your usual work location, such as while working from home. To accommodate this need, product activation lets you install and activate the software on a second computer owned or controlled by you. Please note that the software may be used by only one person and that only one of the two copies may be used at a time. Consult your Autodesk End User License Agreement for complete details for using the software on a second computer.

1.5 I usually buy multiple boxes or copies of Autodesk software, but use just one of the CD serial numbers to install on all of my computers. Will product activation prevent this?

Yes. In cases such as this, Autodesk highly recommends purchasing software as a "multi-seat stand alone" deployment. With a multi-seat stand alone deployment, you receive a single CD and a single serial

number that can be used on as many computers as you buy licenses for. See your reseller for more details.

1.6 What if I buy a new computer and want to use the software on this new computer?

If you upgrade or replace your computer, you can transfer your license to the new or upgraded computer at your convenience. Simply transfer your license from one computer to the other using the Portable License utility.

1.7 I re-format my hard drive often. What impact does activation have in this situation?

You may need to reactivate your software license if you reformat your primary boot disk, although reactivation can be avoided if planned. The Autodesk software documentation outlines a few simple steps you can follow to avoid reactivation when reformatting the hard drive.

1.8 What common changes can trigger the need for reactivation?

- Significantly changing the primary boot disk
- Tampering with any of the activation services or software license files
- Modifying the system date/time properties on a computer that has a time-limited software license
- Reinstalling your operating system

1.9 Does the activation process ever send data to Autodesk after I activate my product?

No, unless a reactivation of your software license is required. Only in the event that your software license becomes invalid, would the activation process need to occur again to properly reactivate your license.

1.10 What if the company shuts down? I paid for the product and should be able to use it in perpetuity.

The Software End User License Agreement grants the user of an Autodesk product the right to use it in perpetuity. In the unlikely event of the company's shutting down, we will enable automatic approval of all activation requests or provide other technical means allowing users to continue using our products.

2. Product Activation Details

2.1 Why is Autodesk requiring Autodesk customers to activate their software?

Product activation is a simple way to reduce and deter unauthorized use and casual copying of Autodesk products, with a minimal effect on our loyal customers.

2.2 What are some objectives of using Product Activation technology?

- Deter unauthorized use and casual copying of Autodesk products
- Improve current business models
- Support new, flexible sales models
- Support license portability

2.3 Which Autodesk products use this activation technology?

Almost all Autodesk products use or will use this technology, with the exception of Discreet Advanced Systems products, some Discreet new media products, and VISION* products.

2.4 How do I activate my software?

Through the activation and registration interface, you can activate your product 24 hours a day, seven days a week over the Internet or via email. Either option takes only a few steps to complete and requires only your product serial number and registration information.

2.5 Do I need to be online to use Autodesk software that includes activation?

Activation and registration is a one-time process, and once you have activated, you do not need to be online to use your software. You need to be online only to electronically complete the activation and registration process, or you can use an alternative method such as email.

If you need to repair your activation, you again must be connected to complete the process electronically or use an alternative method.

2.6 How long does Product Activation take to complete?

Product activation and registration is a one time process that is typically completed when you run the software for the first time. Using the internet method typically takes between 1 to 2 minutes to complete.

2.7 How soon must I activate my product?

Typically, you must activate your product within the 30-day grace period after you first use the software.

2.8 Will the product work without activation when first installed?

Yes. However, the product will work without activation only during the initial grace period from the time the product is first used.

2.9 What happens if I don't activate my product?

If you don't activate your product by the last day of the grace period, you will be unable to use the software until you activate it.

2.10 What if I can't activate my software immediately by Internet?

You have a 30-day grace period after your first launch to activate the product. The software is fully functional during the grace period and will automatically remind you to activate each time you launch the software. After the grace period, the software will stop working until you activate it.

2.11 What if I don't have an Internet connection?

You have a grace period before activation is required. Activating over the Internet is a quick, one-time process. If your computer is temporarily offline, you can activate the next time it's online. Once the software is activated, the activation process no longer needs to connect to the Internet. If you are using the software on a computer that does not have access to the Internet, you can activate the software via one of the alternate methods offered.

2.12 What if I need to get activation during non-business hours?

Through the activation and registration interface, you can activate your product 24 hours a day, seven days a week over the Internet or via email.

2.13 What technology does Autodesk use to implement Product Activation?

The core licensing engine is based on an industry standard Macrovision technology, called SafeCast. Autodesk worked extensively with Macrovision on the activation technology and process to meet the needs of its customers and to provide the best possible experience.

2.14 Do any other software companies use this technology?

Yes, other companies such as Macromedia, Adobe, and Intuit use the SafeCast activation technology from Macrovision.

2.15 Does Product Activation make the software harder to use?

No, activation is a simple one-time process. Most users activate and register their software the first time they use it and never have to worry about it again.

2.16 I've heard that the activation technology stores data to the hard drive, outside the normal file system. Isn't that dangerous?

The activation technology uses a robust and proven algorithm to safely write its license data to an unused sector of the hard drive located in track zero. This technology has been used in a variety of software installed on millions of computers worldwide, and has been verified to be safe by independent sources. This approach allows license data to remain safe even if the software requires reinstallation.

In rare cases where the algorithm determines that writing to track zero may cause a potential conflict, it uses an alternative file system-based anchor for the license data.

2.17 What information is collected and transmitted in the Product Activation process?

We collect the minimum information required to successfully verify the software license for each product installation, which includes: the software serial number, name, version and language; and your computer's mathematic machine ID. This information is combined and sent to Autodesk for verification.

2.18 Does Product Activation slow down my computer?

No. The activation technology has virtually no effect on the overall performance of your computer.

2.19 Can I use my activation code on multiple machines?

No. A unique activation transaction is required per computer and once activated the software license is licensed only for that specific computer.

2.20 Will reinstalling the software provide a new grace period?

No. Only one initial grace period is supported per software license, per computer.

2.21 When is reactivation required?

Product reactivation is only required under circumstances when your computer environment has changed significantly — if, for example, you upgrade or replace your computer, or if the activation process detects that the license has been tampered with.

Reactivation is quicker and easier than the initial activation process since you will have already registered your software.

2.22 If I need another activation code, can a previous activation code be used?

No. The activation code is unique in every instance and cannot be used more than once.

2.23 Is a request code also required for reactivation?

Yes. In the case of reactivation, a new request code is generated and transmitted to Autodesk along with the software serial number, name, version, and language.

2.24 Does uninstalling and reinstalling the software require a new activation code?

No. You can uninstall and reinstall your software without affecting the software license.

2.25 Will any change to the system date/time properties require reactivation?

No. If your software license is not time-limited, there are no restrictions to adjusting your system date/time properties.

If your software license is time-limited, only changes that result in moving the system date/time properties back more than two days would trigger reactivation. If the system date/time properties are wound back by more than two days, the user is first given a chance to reset the date/time in order to avoid reactivation.

2.26 Do I have to reactivate my software if I reinstall or install a new operating system?

Yes, you may need to reactivate your software license if you reinstall the operating system that your software is installed to.

2.27 Does updating BIOS require reactivation?

No. BIOS changes will not require reactivation.

2.28 Does performing a disk image restore of the primary boot disk require reactivation?

Yes, although reactivation can be avoided if planned. The Autodesk software documentation outlines a few simple steps you can follow to avoid reactivation after restoring a disk image.

2.29 My hard drive died. Will I be able to reinstall the software and reactivate it?

Yes. The software will be able to successfully reactivate in most cases after the hardware problem has been resolved.

2.30 Does adding a new hard disk require reactivation?

No. Only changes to the primary boot disk may require reactivation.

2.31 When I launch the software, I see a directory named “C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data\Autodesk\Software Licenses” created on my computer. What is this?

This directory and its contents are used by the activation technology. The files in this directory contain valuable information about the Autodesk software license(s) on the computer. Tampering with this directory or the files within it may result in an error with the software and the need to reactivate your software license(s).

2.32 When I launch the software, a process named “AdskScSrv.exe” starts running on my computer. What is this?

This is the Autodesk Licensing Service used by the activation technology. This service is used to manage only your local Autodesk software licenses. Tampering with this service may result in an error with the software and the need to reactivate your software license(s).

2.33 When I launch the software, a process named “AdskCleanup.xxx” starts running on my computer and a similar named folder is created in my local Temp directory. What is this?

This is a temporary process and set of files used by the activation technology created when you run your Autodesk software product(s). Tampering with this process or the files may result in an error with the software and the need to reactivate your software license(s).

2.34 Is the activation technology removed when I uninstall the software?

The licensing service and files required for the activation technology to work are removed when the software is uninstalled. The software license and track zero license data are not removed when the software is uninstalled. This information remains persistent to avoid the need for license reactivation from software uninstalls / reinstalls.

The Portable License Utility

3.1 Can I move my software license to another computer?

Yes. The Portable License utility (PLU) enables you to transfer your software license from one machine to another. By transferring the software license, the software is disabled on the origin computer and enabled on the destination computer.

There is no limit to the number of license transfers you can perform using the Portable License Utility.

3.2 Can I make changes to my computer without having to reactivate my software?

Yes. You can use the Portable License utility (PLU) to transfer your software license to a different computer before updating your current computer.

After making the computer changes, reinstall your Autodesk software as necessary and use the Portable License utility to transfer the license back to the updated computer.

3.3 Is there documentation explaining how to use the Portable License utility?

Yes. There is Portable License utility documentation installed with your Autodesk software.

4. Product Registration

4.1 Is product registration required?

Yes. Product registration is required for almost all Autodesk software products.

4.2 Is Product Activation the same as product registration?

No. They are two separate yet connected procedures. Product activation is a process that verifies your product serial number and license. Product registration is a process that collects the registered user information, which entitles you to product updates and special offers from Autodesk.

4.3 What information is required for product registration?

Product registration requires that you provide your serial number, company name, user name, address information, and answers to some set of market segmentation questions.

4.4 Is product registration required for reactivation of my software license?

No. Product registration is required only the first time you activate your software license.

Product Activation Questions and Answers

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