

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Microsoft Product Activation

By Richard Lowe

Microsoft Product Activation by Richard Lowe

Let's see if I've got this straight. Microsoft bolts together an excellent office package by purchasing programs from many other companies (or just purchasing the companies outright) and improves those products tremendously. They put an incredibly high price on the product, and in spite of that price manage to sell enough to more-or-less own the market. Admittedly, the product is excellent, so good, in fact, that it is ruthlessly copied by people all over the planet. In spite of the copying, Microsoft manages to eek out a few tens of billions of dollars on this product suite alone.

After numerous releases, the product has finally come close to perfection with Office 2000. In fact, it's so close to perfection that the only significant "features" of the following version are smart tags (which no one seems to want and are not implemented very well anyway) and product activation.

Now it turns out that there really is not any reason for anyone in their right mind to upgrade their Office suite from 2000 to XP. I've looked closely at the new release, and I could not sell my boss on spending several hundred dollars per copy – there is absolutely no return on investment of any kind. And as far as the home version is concerned – why on earth would I want to change? The Office 2000 suite already contains everything I could ever possibly want from this kind of product plus about 2000% more.

Naturally Microsoft has figured this out and has taken steps to remedy the situation. They have decided, in their infinite wisdom, that we shall upgrade whether we like it or not.

You see, businesses are being forced to upgrade through changes in support and licensing agreements. It does not matter that not a single person in my

Microsoft Product Activation

position at any company that I know of has any plans to upgrade to Office XP at any time in the immediate future. We have to purchase the upgrade almost immediately or we may have to pay outrageous fees to upgrade in a few years. Since it's a pretty good bet that the newer operating systems will not run older versions of the Office suite, we are pretty much being forced to upgrade because, well, we don't have any choice.

Obviously Microsoft's biggest problem with home users is convincing them to install the product on one and only one computer system. Heaven forbid that someone purchase a product and actually install it on two computers that he owns – it doesn't matter that he paid over \$479 (\$239 for the upgrade) for a glorified word processor, a spreadsheet program and some other things he

will probably never use.

To prevent this travesty of justice, Microsoft has created product activation. What this means is you purchase the product (in this case, the Office XP suite) and install it on your computer. Now you get to run it 50 times or so before it more or less stops working. You now have to activate the product, which means you let it "phone home" over the internet. You get to do this on one and only one machine.

If the machine changes too much, the product stops working and you may have to do it all again. After too many changes (I think it's two), the product will no longer work at all until you physically pick up the phone and call Microsoft and get a, get this, 50 character activation key.

What on earth is Microsoft using for brains? Here you've got someone who actually purchased their product in spite of the high price and you make it difficult for them to install the thing? On top of that, if they have the gall to want to also install it on their wife's computer, then you force them to go out and buy another copy?

This is (excuse me, was) a loyal customer who plunked down some hard earned money for an office suite which is priced significantly more than the competition. Keep in mind that this person could have bought a much cheaper product like StarOffice, paid a lot less and got every single feature that he could possibly want. He chose Office because he wanted Office, and he was willing to pay extra to get it. And now he gets slammed across the face.

But what about software piracy? This product activation scheme does absolutely nothing to prevent piracy. Believe me, the hackers and crackers had warez copies posted to their sites before the product was even released! You think some silly activation scheme is going to stop these people?

I know, the news has been full of stories about places like China, which reportedly makes millions of illegal copies all of the time. Do you think this silly little thing is going to stop them? I'll bet they had the product activation removed even before the hackers.

What should Microsoft have done? In my humble opinion, they should have created an upgrade that was worth the trouble and price of an upgrade, to begin with. Office XP doesn't even come close. On top of that, how about creating a "home license" which allows copies to be legally made on any computer in a single home? Charge an extra 20% for it if you have to – or better yet, just allow people to make those extra copies on their wife's computer system.

What product activation does is two things: one, it is designed to convince everyone that the upgrade has some value. Otherwise, why would Microsoft bother to work so hard to protect it? Second, it hurts the home user, who

now has to make the choice: purchase multiple copies of office using very hard earned money, purchase a different product (such as StarOffice), or get an illegal copy.

Personally, I'll be checking out the competition. This, by the way, is something that I would never have dreamed about a couple of years ago. In my opinion, the Office 2000 suite is by far the best tool of it's class on the market. But is it worth so much that I'd pay two or three times for it? Hardly. No, let's see, where can I get a demo copy of StarOffice? Perhaps WordPerfect or Lotus has improved in the five years or so since I looked at them last? Let's see...

Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets at <http://www.internet-tips.net> – Visit our website any time to read over 1,000 complete FREE articles about how to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

FreeDOS

By Stephen Bucaro

Before September 1995, Microsoft Windows was an MS-DOS program. DOS was an easy to use command line operating system that provided you with complete ability to control and troubleshoot your computer. Microsoft's goal was to eliminate DOS, possibly to prevent you from having complete control of your own computer.

The last stand-alone version of MS-DOS was version 6. Unfortunately, that version is not Y2K compliant. Windows 95 and later came with MS-DOS version 7. Unfortunately, that version is too

Microsoft Product Activation

integrated with the operating system. It will not work without access to your hard disk.

FreeDOS is a PC compatible Y2K compliant DOS that you can download from www.freedos.org. FreeDOS fits on a single floppy disk and can be used to boot your computer. Download and unzip the file `odin7bin.zip` (756KB). Unzipping will create the files `diskcopy.exe` and `fdodin07.144`. Put a blank formatted floppy disk in the drive. In the Start | Run dialog box, or at a command prompt type "`diskcopy fdodin07.144 a:`" to create a bootable FreeDOS floppy disk.

Why would you want to boot your computer with DOS? Maybe you want to use Windows XP without product activation.

First make sure that the BIOS boot sequence on your computer is configured with the floppy drive as the first boot device (or at least before the C: drive). To get to the BIOS configuration screen, press the "Delete" or "F2" key (depending upon your BIOS) while your computer is starting.

Insert the FreeDOS floppy disk in the floppy drive and start the computer. At the `A:\>_` prompt type `DATE`. FreeDOS will return your computer's current date, along with a prompt to enter a new date. Enter the date that you installed Windows XP (or at least a date before the 30 day expiration date). Remove the FreeDOS floppy disk and restart your computer.

Note: This will only work if Windows XP has never been started after the 30 day expiration date. The first time Windows XP is started after the 30 day expiration date will be the last time it starts.

Every time you start your computer, start it first with FreeDOS and reset the computer's date to the date that you installed Windows XP. Windows XP will think time has come to a standstill.

Note: Of course, Your file creation and last modified dates will not be correct, so this is not really a way for a serious user to bypass Windows XP product activation. However for certain purposes, like learning the Windows XP operating system, this can be a way to use Windows XP without product activation.

Microsoft should have made the expiration period much longer than 30 days. Maybe they want you to activate Windows XP before it crashes.

Permission is granted for the below article to forward, reprint, distribute, use for ezine, newsletter, website, offer as free bonus or part of a product for sale as long as no changes are made and the byline, copyright, and the resource box below is included.

Copyright(C)2004 Bucaro TechHelp. To learn how to maintain your computer and use it more effectively to design a Web site and make money on the Web visit

To subscribe to Bucaro

TechHelp Newsletter Send a blank email to

FreeDOS

Microsoft AntiSpyware Program Review

Microsoft Great Plains: Manufacturing or Bill of Materials – overview for IT Specialist

Microsoft C# vs. VB.Net

IBM Lotus Domino or Microsoft Exchange?

Gag Gifting.

IP Ad Websender – The Ultimate Promotion Tool

Organic Secrets

PPC Profits

Click Magnet Software



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!