

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Windows Key Finder](#)

Pow3r - September 30, 2023, 4:35 am

Hi Guys

My laptop crashed and I'm wanting to reinstall my OS, however in the crash I've obviously lost my Windows product key. Is there a free way to find it? As I don't want to be paying out if I can avoid it. I am accessing the HDD from a separate PC if that affects anything. Thanks guys.

Astonished - September 30, 2023, 5:23 am

Depends what kind of key it was, some of us have OEM keys, that are single use only, typically you get these with prebuilds or from cheap key sites.

You could also have a Retail key, which can be activated multiple times but only on one device at a time supposedly.

Lastly, you could have a key bound to your Microsoft account, so just logging in would give you the option to activate windows again.

Pow3r - September 30, 2023, 6:09 am

I believe it's an OEM key and the computer itself wasn't the issue, the OS had a melt down (I didn't explain it very well as I was rushing) I can still access the files by connecting the HDD to another computer, I just want to reinstall the OS fresh on the original PC and I need the key to do so.

Are there any free key finders that would do the job that you or any one else is aware of? Thank you.

Astonished - September 30, 2023, 7:14 am

You don't need a windows key to install windows 10, you can say you don't have a product key, it'll just have the activate windows watermark and inability to set your desktop background.

OEM keys are single use, so to the best of my knowledge, even if you found out what the key was you wouldn't be able to use it again. Cheap ones can be found on many sites but I couldn't and wouldn't recommend a specific site incase you had issues using them.

Pow3r - September 30, 2023, 8:06 am

(Sep 30, 2023 07:14 AM)killmenow Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) You don't need a windows key to install windows 10, you can say you don't have a product key, it'll just have the activate windows watermark and inability to set your desktop background.

OEM keys are single use, so to the best of my knowledge, even if you found out what the key was you wouldn't be able to use it again. Cheap ones can be found on many sites but I couldn't and wouldn't recommend a specific site incase you had issues using them.

I see. Ok thank you for the help. It's windows 8.1, just an older PC I use for light work. Thanks again.

Astonished - September 30, 2023, 8:43 am

(Sep 30, 2023 08:06 AM)Pow3r Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I see. Ok thank you for the help. It's windows 8.1, just

an older PC I use for light work. Thanks again.

Ah I see, I'm not sure for windows 8, I made the assumption you meant Win 10 so that's mad bad. I just know OEM regardless is single use so if you're reinstalling the OS you'll need another one.

Bastille - October 1, 2023, 12:54 am

(Sep 30, 2023 07:14 AM)killmenow Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) OEM keys are single use, so to the best of my knowledge, even if you found out what the key was you wouldn't be able to use it again. Cheap ones can be found on many sites but I couldn't and wouldn't recommend a specific site in case you had issues using them.

OEM keys are stored into the motherboard, so if you change your disk you can still use it. The problem of OEM is if you change the motherboard.

+1 for the license you can get for cheap :) I often buy on Amazon Pro versions of Windows and it's between 5 and 10 bucks with fast delivery

(Sep 30, 2023 08:06 AM)Pow3r Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I see. Ok thank you for the help. It's windows 8.1, just an older PC I use for light work. Thanks again.

I remember one time a customer had an issue with his laptop which was on Windows 7, we installed Windows 10 and the key worked :)

Just use the Windows Media Creation Tool to create your bootable flash drive :

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10ISO>

Let me know if you encounter any issue

Undead - October 1, 2023, 3:58 am

From Windows 8 onwards, license keys are embedded into the motherboard so as long as you install the same Windows edition, it will be activated automatically.

DramaKing - October 1, 2023, 6:00 am

(Oct 1, 2023 03:58 AM)Undead Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) From Windows 8 onwards, license keys are embedded into the motherboard so as long as you install the same Windows edition, it will be activated automatically.

I checked and that was actually done only for OEM Windows 8 and 8.1 PCs. Windows 10 and 11 convert product keys to digital licenses, which are stored on Microsoft activation servers and associated with the Microsoft account.