# Innovate faster
## with Windows Server, version 1709

Developers and IT professionals focused on modernizing applications need to move fast to react to opportunities. More than ever, they need early access to the latest technology to build value and drive efficiencies.

Organizations using Windows Server 2016 are already benefiting from features focused on both innovation and efficiency. As Microsoft continues to improve these capabilities, customers can take advantage of a stream of new features by adopting Windows Server in the new Semi-Annual Channel. This release cadence aligns to Windows and Office releases and delivers new features and capabilities every six months, starting with Windows Server, version 1709.

Run Windows Server, version 1709 on-premises or in the cloud, side-by-side with Windows Server Long-Term Servicing Channel releases, including Windows Server 2016 based on your business needs. If you do not have Software Assurance, you can benefit from capabilities in Windows Server, version 1709 when you license it through Azure or your service provider.

## Faster innovation for applications

Apps help organizations differentiate themselves from the competition to win, engage, and support customers. Developers building and updating apps don't want to wait. They want infrastructure on demand, and they want apps in production to work the same way the apps work on developers' machines.

With Windows Server, version 1709, developers and IT pros can easily modernize traditional apps using containers and microservices and write new cloud apps. Containers can speed application deployment and streamline the way IT operations and development teams collaborate to deliver applications. In addition, developers can use microservices architectures to separate app functionality into smaller, independently deployable services, which make it easier to upgrade part of the app without affecting the rest.

### Get answers to your questions

What is the difference between traditional Windows Server releases and the Semi-Annual Channel?

The Semi-Annual Channel was designed for organizations that need faster access to new features and capabilities. It's a new servicing option in addition to the traditional Long-Term Servicing Channel (LTSC) you probably already use.

- The traditional model (LTSC) offers releases approximately every two to three years, and includes five years of mainstream support, five years of extended support, and six additional years of support with Premium Assurance.

- The Semi-Annual Channel offers a release every six months, with 18 months of support. Each release will build on the prior one and add new capabilities.

Semi-Annual Channel capabilities will be rolled into a future Long-Term Servicing Channel release.

The Semi-Annual Channel will work well for customers that are innovating quickly in applications, particularly those built on containers and microservices architectures, as well as customers moving to a software-defined hybrid datacenter. If you don't have Software Assurance active for your Windows Server licenses, you can use the Semi-Annual Channel images available in the Azure marketplace or images provided by your cloud service provider

## App innovation only in Windows Server, version 1709

- **Modernize existing apps.** Deliver container benefits to existing apps with minimal or no code changes by moving apps from virtual machines to containers. The Server Core container image is ideal for this use case because it includes support for traditional server roles.

- **Build modern apps faster.** Build new cloud apps with an optimized Nano Server container image that is 70 percent smaller than earlier versions, further decreasing startup times and improving container density and performance.

- **Improve Linux operations.** Run Linux and Windows containers side by side when you deploy Linux containers with Hyper-V isolation. In addition, run Linux tools unmodified with the Windows Subsystem for Linux.

- **Improve container storage flexibility.** Gain new options for shared local and remote storage, including support for SMB (Server Message Block) shares to present a shared storage for the container file system – in a way that is totally transparent for the container.

- **Manage containers smoothly.** Use integrated container management tools including Docker, Azure Container Service, and Azure Service Fabric.

## Take the next steps

Join Windows Insiders https://insider.windows.com/en-us/for-business

Join the Windows Server community
https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/Windows-Server/ct-p/Windows-Server

Learn more at www.microsoft.com/windowsserver

### Bring Windows Server licenses to Azure

Save money when you use Windows Server licenses in Azure. The Azure Hybrid Benefit lets you bring your on-premises Windows Server licenses with Software Assurance to Azure. Rather than paying the full price for a new Windows Server virtual machine, you pay only the base compute rate.

### More answers to your questions

Which editions of Windows Server participate in the Semi-annual Channel?

Windows Server Standard and Datacenter editions.

Can I upgrade from a Long-term Servicing Channel release to a feature release on the Semi-Annual Channel?

Customers with Software Assurance can deploy a Semi-Annual Channel feature release but there's no support for in-place upgrades. You also retain control when patching your server; Microsoft will not automatically update it for you.

Do you still offer technical previews?

We are replacing technical previews with the Windows Insider program, where customer testing provides feedback that helps define future releases. Participants gain early access to builds before official release on the Semi-Annual Channel.

Microsoft