

What is Windows Thin PC?

Windows® Thin PC (WinTPC) is an upcoming Microsoft® Software Assurance (SA) benefit that provides a low footprint, locked down version of Windows 7 that enables organizations to repurpose existing PCs as thin clients, thereby reducing the need for new thin client hardware. And since these PCs retain their existing SA coverage, they do not need any additional Windows Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) licensing for Microsoft Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) Suites. WinTPC offers an excellent thin client experience by locking down the PC through write filters, while still providing users with a superior remote desktop experience through RemoteFX support. IT can deploy and manage WinTPC images for multiple PCs using System Center Configuration Manager, and push updates to these PCs using Windows Update or Windows Server® Update Services (WSUS). Additionally, WinTPC leverages Windows Enterprise features such as BitLocker® and AppLocker™ to further secure the endpoint.

When will Windows Thin PC be available?

WinTPC is currently under development. As of March 28th, 2011, a public Community Technology Preview (CTP) is available from <http://connect.microsoft.com>. Customers are encouraged to download and try the product, and provide us feedback on features, functionality, and use cases.

What kind of hardware can I run Windows Thin PC on?

WinTPC is a locked down version of Windows 7, and hence, will be able to run on any device capable of running Windows 7. The recommended specifications for running Windows Thin PC are:

- 1 GHz or faster 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
- 1 GB RAM, 16 GB available hard disk space
- DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM 1.0 or later version driver
- Bootable DVD-ROM drive

Can I install Windows Thin PC on laptops, as well?

Yes, WinTPC leverages the extensive Windows 7 device driver framework, and has built-in support for wireless network interface cards (NICs). As long as the laptops have the configuration mentioned above, it will support WinTPC. However, the same use rights apply to WinTPC on a laptop as on a PC, and the remote desktop experience over a wireless network may not be as good as on a wired connection.

How do I license Windows Thin PC? OR What devices qualify for Windows Thin PC?

Windows Thin PC is an SA benefit. Customers with active SA coverage on their PCs will be able to install WinTPC on those devices. Customers without active SA coverage on their PCs can get SA by purchasing a Windows Virtual Desktop Access subscription, which includes SA benefits such as WinTPC. However, only devices with an existing Windows client OS (Professional / Business, Enterprise, Ultimate) qualify for WinTPC.

Can I run applications on Windows Thin PC?

Yes, you can only run applications that fall into one of the following categories:

- Remote desktop clients
- Management
- Security
- Media players

However, you cannot run any productivity applications, such as Microsoft Office and similar applications.

Can I run WinTCP in a virtual machine (VM)?

No, WinTCP cannot be run in a VM.

How can Windows Thin PC help lock down my device as a thin client?

Windows Thin PC can help turn your existing PCs into thin clients through the following features:

1. Small footprint: WinTPC images are smaller than Windows 7 images, and hence have a lower attack surface.
2. Write Filters: WinTPC has both file-based and enhanced write filters. Write filters can be enabled to prevent users and applications from writing to disk, ensuring the OS returns to a pristine image on every reboot.
3. BitLocker: WinTPC disk drives and flash storage can be encrypted using BitLocker and Bitlocker To Go™ technology, thereby ensuring that any data stored on disk is secure.
4. AppLocker: IT can prevent applications from running on WinTPC.

Does WinTPC support RemoteFX out of the box?

Yes, WinTPC supports a rich user experience for the remote virtual desktop through RemoteFX technology. Customers deploying virtual desktops on Windows Server 2008 R2 SP1 with Hyper-V™ can enable RemoteFX to help deliver rich graphics and multimedia to WinTPC devices.

How can I manage Windows Thin PC images?

WinTPC integrates into your existing image deployment and management infrastructure, with built-in support for System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM). SCCM can be used to deploy and manage WinTPC images to endpoint devices. Customers can extend their investments in Powershell to WinTPC devices, as well. Operating system (OS) patches and updates can be delivered to WinTPC using Windows Update (WU) or WSUS.

I do not have SA on my PCs. Can I get WinTPC through other channels?

WinTPC is an SA benefit, and is not available outside of SA. Customers without active SA coverage on their PCs can get SA by purchasing a Windows Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) subscription, which includes SA benefits such as WinTPC. Although Windows VDA can be purchased for any device, only devices with an existing Windows client OS (Professional / Business, Enterprise, Ultimate) qualify for WinTPC. Please refer to the Products List/Products Use Rights document for more details around WinTPC use rights.

What is Microsoft's recommendation to customers to adopt WinTPC?

Microsoft wants to help customers adopt thin client computing for the right use cases. In order to ensure that customers get the best ROI from their thin client computing environment, Microsoft recommends the following:

1. Use Microsoft's Optimized Desktop Strategy to determine the most appropriate use cases for server-based desktops. For these use cases, determine which users would benefit most from thin clients (i.e, those users who need local desktops or applications).
2. For pure server-based desktop scenarios, repurpose existing PCs using WinTPC. Customers will be able to evaluate the thin client experience without buying new thin client hardware, or paying the associated VDA licensing costs for VDI. WinTPC provides an excellent thin client experience, due to support for RemoteFX, as well as the ability to lock down writes to hard disk through write filters. WinTPC can also be managed using an existing desktop management infrastructure through support for System Center. In case customers decide they do not like the thin client computing experience, they have the option to repurpose the devices back as PCs.
3. Once customers have decided to move forward with thin client computing, and the WinTPCs have reached end of life, they can replace them with new Windows Embedded thin clients from Microsoft partners such as HP and Wyse. Windows Embedded thin clients integrate with System Center, and hence customers can easily leverage all security and management investments made in WinTPC.