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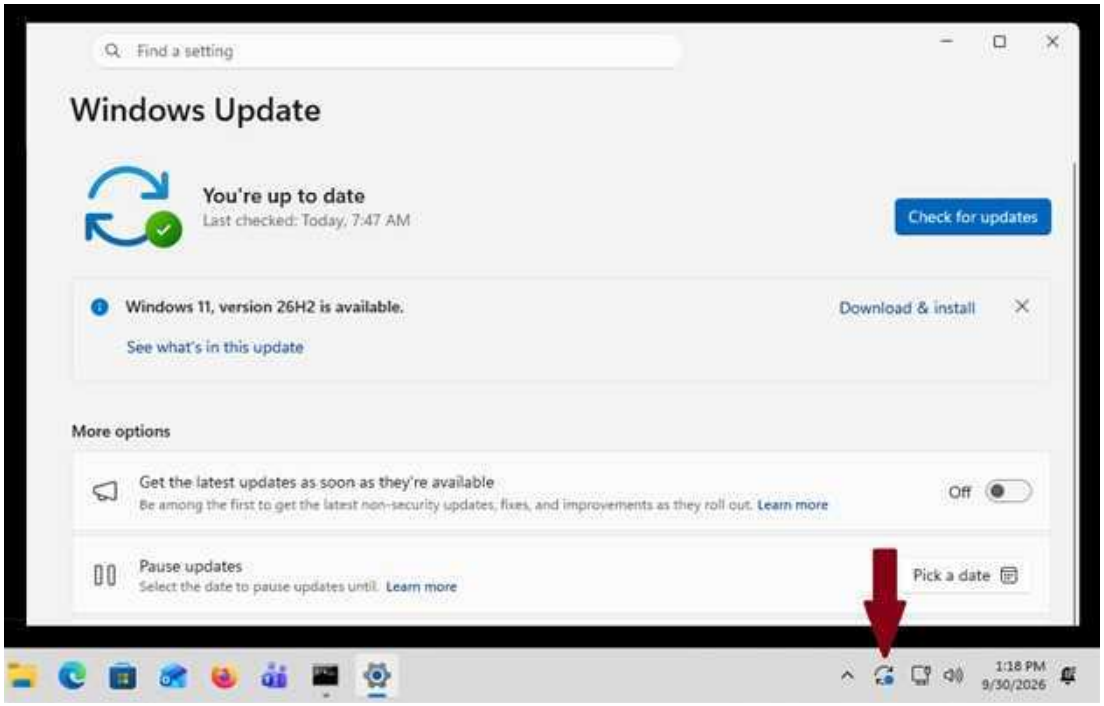
PC Updater News

Windows 26H2 Has Launched

Don’t Be the Lab Rat

It’s not that I don’t trust the new 2026 second-half annual update to Windows 11; I’ve installed a handful of them since the release on September 30th, with no issues. But those computers have full backups, and are not computers that I rely upon every day. Don’t be the lab rat that installs right away; wait until after the November 10th Patch Tuesday updates have been released.

I did see one computer offered this update in Windows Update on the very first day of release, and that’s not the usual pattern. In prior years, the annual updates launch as manual downloads for the users that go looking for them, as below, and then the upgrade goes out to more computers as different models accumulate an install record back at Microsoft.



That blue dot in the rounded-arrows tray icon means there is a feature update ready to install. Orange means a restart is needed to install an update. Red indicates that a security update has to install or that there's another security issue. Right-click that icon and go to the Windows Update page of Settings to read the message.

In most cases, just wait for other people to find the bugs and the unintended feature damage. Microsoft will patch the most-common issues in a few weeks. If you are likely to be affected by any of these known issues, WAIT, do not upgrade yet:

- Remote-controlled systems may show just a black screen. If you remote into your office system, WAIT for a fix, or call me for help.
- Very old USB speakers, known as " USB Audio Class 1.0 devices" may not work. These are from the early days of USB gadgets, from 1998 to around 2006.
- Users on domain-based networks using active directory may not be able to log in. (Leave this update to your network admin.)

System requirements have not changed, and any computer that could run Windows 11 25H2 should have no trouble with 26H2.

Like all the other annual versions, updates will be available for two years after launch, so up to October 14, 2028 for 26H2. As of now, the only patched

editions are 25H2 and 26H2. While there is also a 26H1 version, that's exclusively for Snapdragon-processor notebooks. 26H2 is for Intel and AMD systems.

Reminder: You can read the current version of Windows by clicking Start (that blue logo), typing EITHER 'ram' or 'winver' and clicking on the results, either 'winver' or 'View RAM info.'

Want it Now?

If you have a non-essential computer and want to try it out, sure, go ahead. You can use the 'download and install' link, if it appears in Windows Update, as above. Or visit the official page: https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/software-download/windows11

Choose the 'Windows 11 Installation Assistant.' That's the fastest and easiest option. Again, create a full image backup first. **There is only a ten-day rollback window** for going back to the earlier Windows version–if you need

that, look in Update History.

What's New

The Windows Task Bar can go to the top or sides of the desktop; that feature was available in Windows 10, and then gone. A smaller icon size is available for the taskbar.

The camera can now be accessed by more than one program at a time. If you're trying to run Zoom and Teams meeting simultaneously, this will allow it. Or maybe a chat window combined with an online game could share the camera.

Windows Update will allegedly work with fewer reboots. To me, that sounds more like disciplined behavior from the updates group than an actual software change in Windows, but it's welcome, if it happens this time; it has been promised in earlier versions.

File Explorer should do a better job of remembering view options and sort options on a per-folder level in 26H2. There are new right-click options like 'Ask Copilot' but that requires a login to Copilot.

What's Gone

- Paint 3D has been removed. Paint has new AI features, and is still available.
- WordPad is gone as well, but it's available to install through the Windows Store.

Defined: Brushing Scams

You've got a package! And you didn't order it. What's that about?

Brushing Scam: A package is delivered to you, unordered, usually used in order to create reviews at the shipper, marked with something similar to 'verified purchase.' The target is usually the public, the people who look at the

fake reviews and believe them. While a hacked account may have been used to place the order, it might not be your own account.

What to do?

Check for account theft: If the shipper was a company you do business with, check your purchase history to make sure no one was in your account placing orders in your name.

Also look at your reviews to see if a review was written in your name. It probably was not, because the fake review will show up as being from whomever's account PAID FOR the item, not who received it. To find your reviews on Amazon, go to your Account Settings (top-right of each page), scroll down to and click on 'Ordering and shopping preferences' and then choose 'Your Amazon profile.'

If that mystery item is not in your orders and not in your reviews, somebody else's account was used for the purchase. If it's there, you can ship it back as a return, and you can delete the review from the list. And contact the shipper to reset your password, and check that all other settings on the account are only yours.

OK, it's not in my account. Do I have to return it? No, the law is clear on this--it's yours. If you trust the shipper to have sent you a legit and safe product,

yes, do with it what you wish; use it, give it away, or donate it.

If there's a note or invoice: Don't use a QRCode or web link from a mystery package to check on what that box is. QRCodes are blind in general, and usually redirect a few times before you see a result page, which could be a look-alike to a real shipper's site, and may ask for your account info. Don't follow those links, and don't call any phone numbers on any label or shipping paperwork.

Here's more on brushing scams at the Federal Trade Commission: https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2026/08/unexpected-package-you-got-could-be-brushing-scam

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Mailing address:
Science Translations
PO Box 1735
Westminster, MD 21158-5735