VMware Fusion & Workstation (Desktop Hypervisor) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Introduction

VMware's Desktop Hypervisor portfolio — including VMware Fusion and VMware Workstation — provides powerful, local virtualization tools for developers, students, IT professionals, and enthusiasts to run virtual machines and containers on Windows, Linux, and macOS hosts. This FAQ answers common customer questions about the free licensing model, product capabilities, intended use, and available resources.

Overview & General Product Questions

Q. What is a desktop hypervisor?

A. A desktop hypervisor is software that allows a physical computer to run multiple virtual machines simultaneously. VMware Fusion and Workstation are examples, enabling users to create and manage VMs on personal desktops or laptops.

Q. What are VMware Fusion and Workstation?

A. VMware Fusion and Workstation are desktop hypervisor products that allow users to run virtual machines, containers, and Kubernetes clusters directly on their Windows, Linux, or macOS devices. These tools help developers, IT professionals, and enthusiasts create isolated environments for testing, development, and learning.

Q. How do Fusion and Workstation work?

A. They work by using hardware-assisted virtualization to simulate a full hardware stack, allowing users to run multiple operating systems on one physical machine. Each virtual machine (VM) operates independently with its own virtual CPU, memory, and storage, managed by VMware's virtualization engine.

Q. What are these products intended for?

A. Fusion and Workstation are designed for a range of use cases, including software development, application testing, system emulation, home labs, certifications, and educational environments. They're also ideal for power users and professionals who need multiple OS environments on a single device.

Q. Where can I learn more or get started?

A. You can visit the VMware Desktop Hypervisor products page, consult the Broadcom Support Portal, review the VMware Fusion Documentation, VMware Workstation Documentation, or see the March 2025 blog post for more resources.

Product Changes

Q. What has changed with VMware Fusion and Workstation?

A. As of March 2025, the current versions of VMware Fusion Pro and Workstation Pro are available at no charge for all use cases, including personal, educational, and commercial use. Users no longer need to purchase a license for these versions for any scenario. Broadcom will continue releasing updates and security patches but will no longer sell new support contracts for these versions.

Q. What happens to existing commercial and/or enterprise customers?

A. If you are an existing commercial and/or enterprise customer, your current contract will remain in place until the end of your term. You will continue to receive the full level of service and enterprise-grade support as agreed in your contract. Active contracts remain valid, and support can still be accessed via the Broadcom Support Portal.

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Q. What will happen when my contract ends?

A. Your software will continue to function as before, and you will retain access to the full feature set. However, direct support ticketing with Broadcom and certain other features of enterprise-grade support will no longer be available once your contract expires. We understand that this may be an adjustment, and we encourage you to take advantage of VMware's robust community forums, knowledge base, and online documentation, which remain available to help address any questions or issues.

Q. Is this a one-time promotion?

A. No. This licensing update reflects a long-term strategic shift by Broadcom to broaden the reach and adoption of its desktop hypervisor solutions. At this time, Broadcom does not have plans of making future releases paid.

Q. Will existing paid features be removed?

A. No, there are no plans to modify any features because of this. VMware will continue to develop and deliver product updates and enhancements to benefit the community.

Technical & Features

Q. Will the free version offer the same features as the paid version?

A. Yes. The free version includes all features previously available only through Fusion Pro and Workstation Pro. This includes support for advanced networking, custom VM configurations, snapshots, encryption, vTPM, Secure Boot, and more.

Q. What operating systems are supported?

A. Supported operating systems:

- VMware Fusion supports macOS, including both Intel-based and Apple Silicon (M1/M2/M3) systems.

- VMware Workstation runs on Windows and Linux hosts. Both support a wide range of guest operating systems, including Windows 11, various Linux distributions, and older OS versions.

Q. What operating systems or platforms do Workstation Pro and Fusion Pro support?

A. VMware Workstation Pro is available for 64-bit Intel and AMD (x86/x86-64) PCs running Windows and Linux operating systems, while VMware Fusion Pro is available for Intel and Apple silicon Macs.

Q. How do Workstation Pro and Fusion Pro work?

A. VMware Workstation Pro and Fusion Pro products utilize specialized functions in modern 64-bit x86-64 CPUs and Apple silicon SoCs to create fully isolated, secure virtual machines that encapsulate an operating system and its applications. Each virtual machine "thinks" and operates as if it is housed in a physical computer with dedicated physical resources. The VMware virtualization layer maps available physical hardware resources to a virtual machine's 'virtual' resources, allowing each VM to have isolated and configurable access to its CPU, memory, disks, and I/O devices.

Q. Are Workstation Player or Fusion Player still available for purchase?

A. As of April 30, 2024, Workstation Player and Fusion Player reached End of Sale (EOS) and are no longer available for purchase or download. They have been replaced by the more powerful Pro editions, which are now free for all use cases. Customers with active contracts for Player editions will continue to receive updates and can access support for the duration of their contract.

Q. What about Workstation Player and Fusion Player Personal Use Licenses?

A. Users can now enjoy the full-featured versions of Workstation Pro and Fusion Pro without requiring a purchased license key. Workstation Pro and Fusion Pro installers, now by default, provide a free personal-use license built in. While Workstation Player and Fusion Player are no longer being sold, they will continue to function and receive product updates until the subsequent major versions are released.

Q. Is Apple Silicon fully supported in Fusion?

A. Yes. Fusion for Apple Silicon supports many Linux distributions and Windows 11 for ARM. Note that not all

x86 guest OS features are available due to differences in hardware architecture.

Q. Can I run Windows 11 in a VM?

A. Yes. Both Fusion and Workstation support Windows 11, with requirements such as TPM, UEFI, and Secure Boot, which can be met via virtualization. Fusion includes a virtual TPM module to ensure compliance.

Q. Are vTPM and Secure Boot supported?

A. Absolutely. Fusion and Workstation include vTPM and UEFI Secure Boot support, which are required for installing and running modern Windows OS securely.

Licensing & Access

Q. Do I need a license key?

A. No. The latest versions of VMware Fusion and Workstation now include the license automatically. There's no need to select a usage type or enter a key — just install and start using the software freely for all purposes.

Q. Can I upgrade from older versions?

A. Yes. Users can upgrade to the latest version. Be sure to review system requirements before upgrading, especially if you're on older hardware or OS versions.

Q. Where do I download the latest versions?

A. You can download VMware Fusion and Workstation from Broadcom Support Portal. For full details and guidance, see Knowledge Base Article KB 368734.

Support & Resources

Q. What kind of support will users have access to?

A. Customers using the free VMware Fusion and Workstation products are not entitled to support through the Broadcom Global Support Team. Instead, Broadcom encourages users to engage with our active community forums — Fusion Community and Workstation Community — as well as our self-service resources.

Q. Is technical support available?

A. While direct support tickets are reserved for customers with active contracts, we have enhanced our online support experience with updated Knowledge Base articles, installation guides, and tutorials to help you resolve issues independently.

Q. How can I get help if I run into issues?

A. You can:

- Explore the updated Knowledge Base Article KB 368734 for common questions and answers

- Follow the step-by-step installation guide with screenshots and links

- Use the updated download and installation guide for Fusion

- Join the Fusion and Workstation Community forums for peer advice and VMware insights

Q. Are there tutorials or videos to help me get started?

A. Yes. We've added tutorials, walkthroughs, and configuration guides — covering everything from installation to advanced configuration — all linked from the March 2025 blog post and documentation pages.

Stay Informed

Q. Will VMware continue to develop Fusion and Workstation?

A. Yes. VMware remains committed to both products with ongoing updates that include new OS support, feature enhancements, and hardware compatibility.

Q. How can I stay updated?

A. Follow the VMware Cloud Foundation Blog, subscribe to VMware email updates, and regularly check the product documentation.

For more details, visit the official VMware product page or explore the latest blog post on this topic here.

Expanded Section

Q. Why is the in-product updater no longer working, and how can I determine if I'm affected?

A. As part of an internal transition, Broadcom deprecated the backend update URL (https://softwareupdate.vmware.com) previously used by Fusion and Workstation. This change causes the in-product updater to fail, resulting in connection errors. Affected users will notice errors when attempting to check for updates through the product interface. More information is available in the VMware Fusion community post and through KB 368734, which includes guidance for manually downloading the latest versions.

Q. What is the manual download process for updates?

A. The in-product updater was deprecated, requiring manual downloads via the Broadcom Support Portal. We acknowledge the registration and export compliance process can be slow. To download:

- Register at Broadcom Profile Registration with accurate details.
- Once approved, access 'My Downloads' in the Broadcom Support Portal and search for 'Fusion' or 'Workstation'.
- See KB 368734 for details.
- We're improving access by promoting guides on VMware.com and pinning them in forums, with a blog post coming to clarify the process.

Q. What notification system will replace the updater, and how will users be informed of new versions?

A. Currently, there is no direct in-product replacement for update notifications. The product team is evaluating alternative solutions, including RSS feeds and telemetry-based alerts. However, no finalized mechanism has been announced.

Q. How can users stay informed about security updates and patches?

A. At present, there is a gap in automated update notifications. Users are encouraged to monitor the official blog, documentation, and Broadcom Support Portal for announcements and to regularly check KB 368734 for the latest release information. In addition, customers can also subscribe to the Fusion and Workstation community announcements to receive notifications when updates are posted.

Q. Why isn't there a simple alert system (e.g., RSS feed, email sign-up, or pinned community thread) like many open-source projects provide?

A. The product team is evaluating options for a lightweight notification system but has not finalized a solution. User feedback is helping shape this decision, and updates will be shared once available.

Q. Is the Broadcom Security Notification Service available to Fusion/Workstation users, and can alerts be filtered by product?

A. This capability is still under evaluation. While the Broadcom Notification Service exists, its accessibility and filtering for Desktop Hypervisor products are not yet tailored to the needs of free-tier users.

Q. Is VMware Fusion and Workstation truly free for both commercial and personal use?

A. Yes. As of March 2025, VMware Fusion Pro and Workstation Pro are available at no cost for all users—personal, educational, and commercial. No subscription or license key is required. This change is outlined in the official blog announcement and support documentation.

Q. Where can I find official documentation that outlines licensing terms for compliance audits?

A. Licensing details are covered in Broadcom's Support Content Notifications, which serve as the formal documentation for licensing and access terms.

Q. Does the free version include official technical support?

A. No. Users of the free version are not entitled to support from the Broadcom Global Support Team. Support is available only for customers with active, pre-existing contracts. All others are encouraged to use the self-service options: knowledge base articles, documentation, tutorials, and the Fusion and Workstation community forums.

Q. Are my previously purchased perpetual licenses still valid?

A. Yes. If you purchased VMware Fusion or Workstation prior to the transition, your perpetual license remains valid. Broadcom is honoring active support contracts associated with those licenses until they naturally expire.

Q. How can I recover a lost license key or download my purchased version?

A. Log into the Broadcom Support Portal, navigate to My Licenses, and retrieve any license keys tied to your account. Keys purchased within the last two years before the acquisition were restored due to export restrictions and compliance policies.

Quick Links

NEW! - VMware Workstation/Fusion Keys

Product Lifecycle

Technical Documentation

Usage Feed

Q. Why can't legacy users access minor or patch updates without a current contract?

A. All users—including legacy license holders—can register for a basic account on the Broadcom Support Portal. After export compliance review, access is granted to downloads and updates, regardless of support status.

Q. What support options exist for EOL or unsupported versions?

A. Users must upgrade to a supported version to receive technical updates. However, customers with active support contracts will continue receiving assistance until their term expires—even for products approaching end-of-life.

Q. Can Broadcom reinstate access to older purchase history or legacy VMware downloads?

A. No. Broadcom does not plan to reinstate full access to previous VMware purchase records or versions outside of the restored window mentioned above.

Q. What is the long-term roadmap for VMware Fusion and Workstation?

A. The new cadence targets two major releases per year, labeled by half-year versions (e.g., 25H2, 26H1, 26H2). Development will continue based on available resources and product alignment with the broader VMware ecosystem.

Q. Why are legacy features being removed without replacement (e.g., Unity Mode, ThinPrint, Bluetooth passthrough)?

A. Feature removals are documented in the release notes. These decisions are based on technical complexity, deprecated usage, and prioritization for supported platforms.

Q. Are performance issues on newer hardware—like Intel 11th Gen and above—being addressed?

A. Yes. The team is actively reviewing community feedback and prioritizing fixes based on severity and engineering bandwidth.

Q. Is Broadcom planning to phase out the desktop hypervisor portfolio?

A. No. While investment may be conservative, Broadcom has no current plans to sunset Fusion or Workstation. Development will continue as part of a long-term strategic review.

Q. What's the formal channel for reporting issues beyond the community forums?

A. Currently, there is no public bug reporting tool (e.g., Bugzilla or feedback portal). The product team monitors the Fusion and Workstation communities to identify high-impact issues.

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Q. Why isn't there a dedicated tool for public issue tracking?

A. There are no announced plans to implement one. However, critical issues reported through the community are escalated internally and tracked in VMware's private bug system (Bugzilla) when warranted.

Q: How are forum-reported bugs escalated or prioritized?

A. The engineering and product teams monitor the community forums regularly. Issues receiving significant attention or that impact usability across multiple users are prioritized for inclusion in upcoming releases.

Q. What is changing with the version naming for VMware Workstation and Fusion?

A. VMware is shifting from traditional numeric versioning to a calendar-based naming convention. For example, rather than using version numbers like **17.6.x** for Workstation or **13.6.x** for Fusion, future releases will adopt labels such as **25H2**, **26H1**, etc. reflecting the year and half of release. This change improves clarity for customers, simplifies lifecycle planning, and aligns with other VMware product versioning practices.

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