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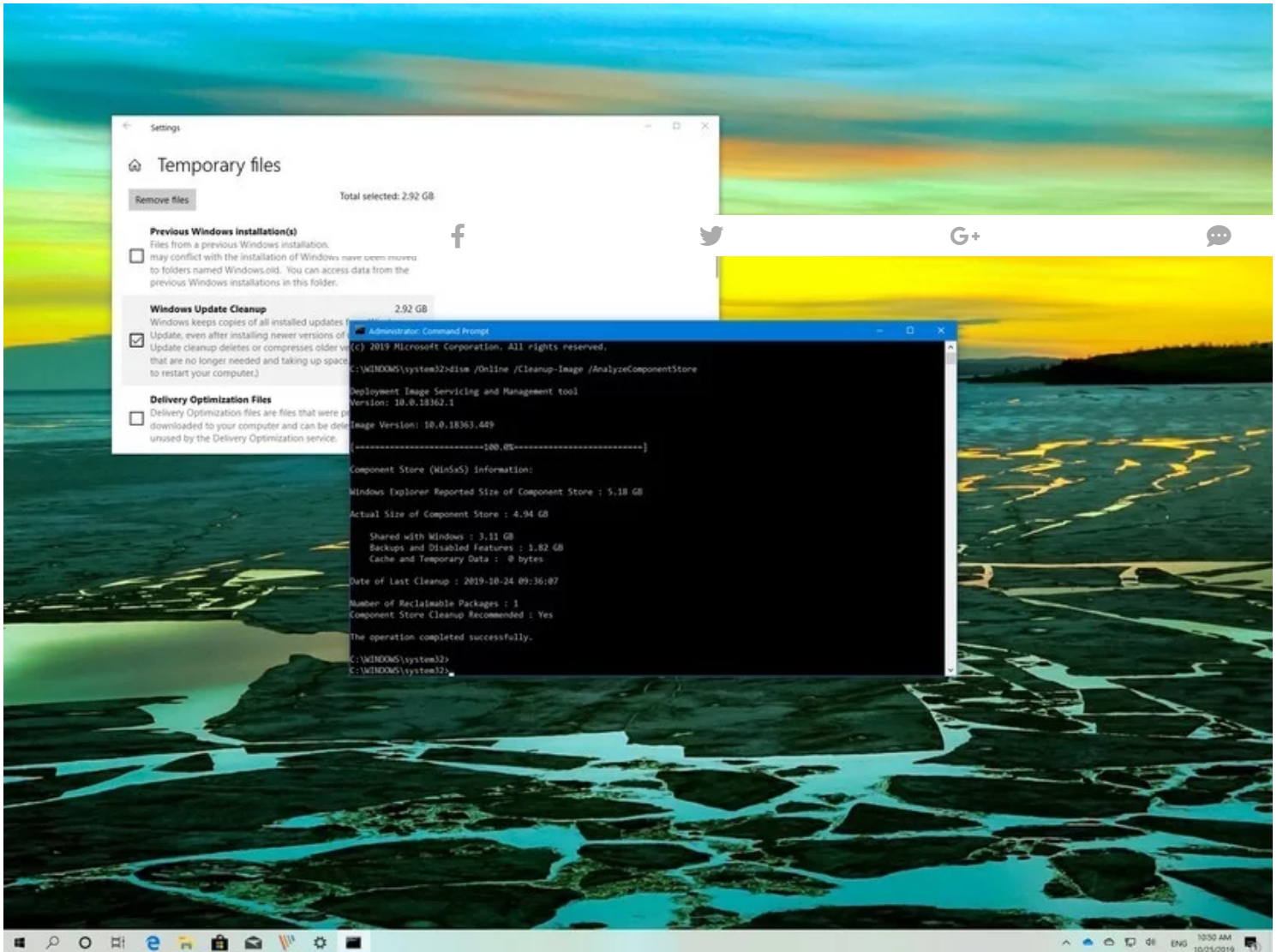
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MAINTENANCE

How to reclaim space reducing size of WinSxS folder on Windows 10

You can't delete the WinSxS folder, but you can clean up its contents to free up space on Windows 10, and in this guide, we'll show you how.

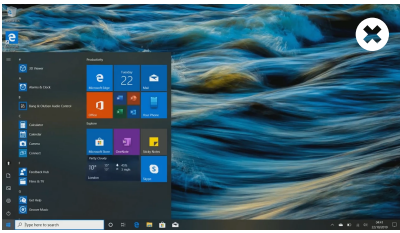
MAURO HUCULAK 28 Oct 2019



On Windows 10, "WinSxS" (Windows Side by Side) is an essential folder within the "Windows" folder, which contains most of the components to customize and update the current installation. For instance, inside the WinSxS folder are located the files to add or remove features, switch editions, recover damaged or missing system files, and pretty much everything else that makes up the OS.

Also, when installing quality updates, the new components will store in the WinSxS folder as well as the previous version of the components in the case rolling back to an earlier build is necessary to remove a problematic update. As a result, over time, the folder will continue to increase its size without a set limit.





While the WinSxS folder is expected to grow larger over time, the actual size on disk isn't as big as it may seem. The problem is that most people would use File Explorer to calculate its size. Because the folder uses "hard linking," a technique that allows the creation of pointers of an original file with entirely different names and locations in the same partition, they'll appear as separate files to applications (such as File Explorer) reporting the wrong size.

If you're trying to free up space, you won't be able to delete the WinSxS folder. However, it's possible to reduce its size deleting those files that are no longer required for the operation of Windows 10, and you can accomplish this task using Command Prompt, Storage sense, and even the legacy Disk Cleanup tool.



In this Windows 10 guide, we'll walk you through the steps to properly clean up the WinSxS folder to reclaim storage space on your computer.

- [How to reduce size of WinSxS folder using Command Prompt](#)
- [How to reduce size of WinSxS folder using Storage sense](#)
- [How to reduce size of WinSxS folder using Disk Cleanup](#)

How to reduce size of WinSxS folder using Command Prompt

If you want to clean up the WinSxS folder with Command Prompt, you'll have to use the Deployment Image Servicing and Management (DISM) tool in a two-step process. You first want to determine the actual size of the folder on the drive, and then you need to run the command to delete the files wasting space.

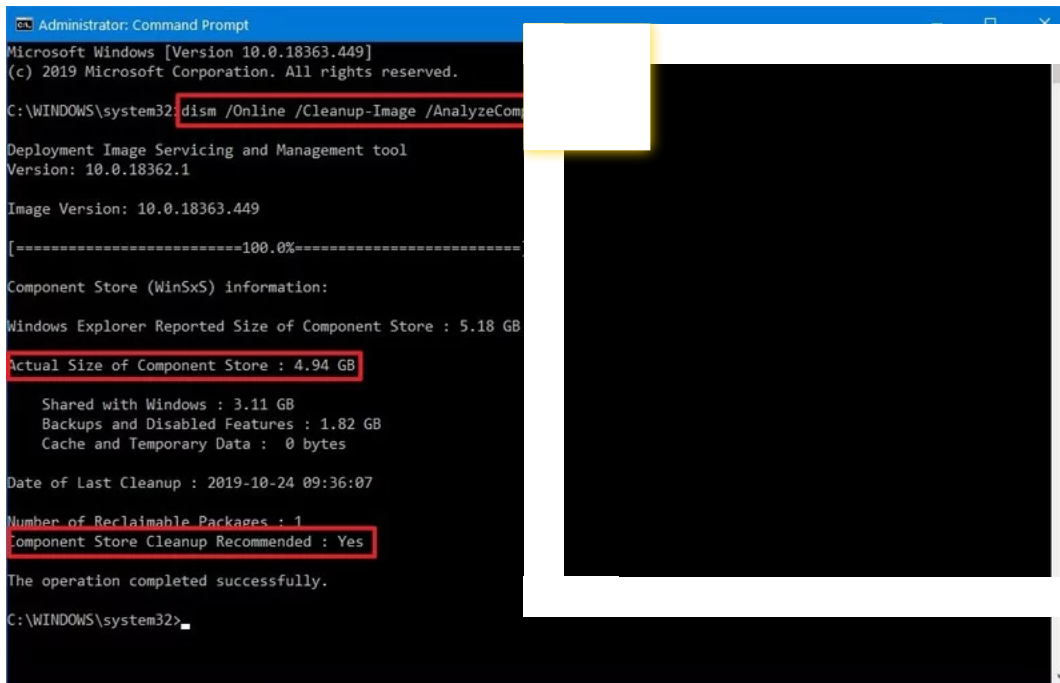
Checking WinSxS folder size

To determine the actual size of the WinSxS folder, use these steps:

1. Open **Start**.
2. Search for **Command Prompt**, right-click the top result, and select the **Run as administrator** option.
3. Type the following command to determine the size of the WinSxS folder and press **Enter**:

```
dism /Online /Cleanup-Image /AnalyzeComponentStore
```





```

Administrator: Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18363.449]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>dism /Online /Cleanup-Image /AnalyzeCom
Deployment Image Servicing and Management tool
Version: 10.0.18362.1

Image Version: 10.0.18363.449

[=====100.0%=====]

Component Store (WinSxS) information:

Windows Explorer Reported Size of Component Store : 5.18 GB
Actual Size of Component Store : 4.94 GB

  Shared with Windows : 3.11 GB
  Backups and Disabled Features : 1.82 GB
  Cache and Temporary Data : 0 bytes

Date of Last Cleanup : 2019-10-24 09:36:07

Number of Reclaimable Packages : 1
Component Store Cleanup Recommended : Yes

The operation completed successfully.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>

```

4. Confirm the reported size of the component store to see how much space the WinSxS folder is taking.
5. Check the "Component Store Cleanup Recommended" information to determine if cleanup is necessary.

Once you complete the steps, you'll be able to determine the actual size of the Windows Side by Side folder and if cleanup is recommended.

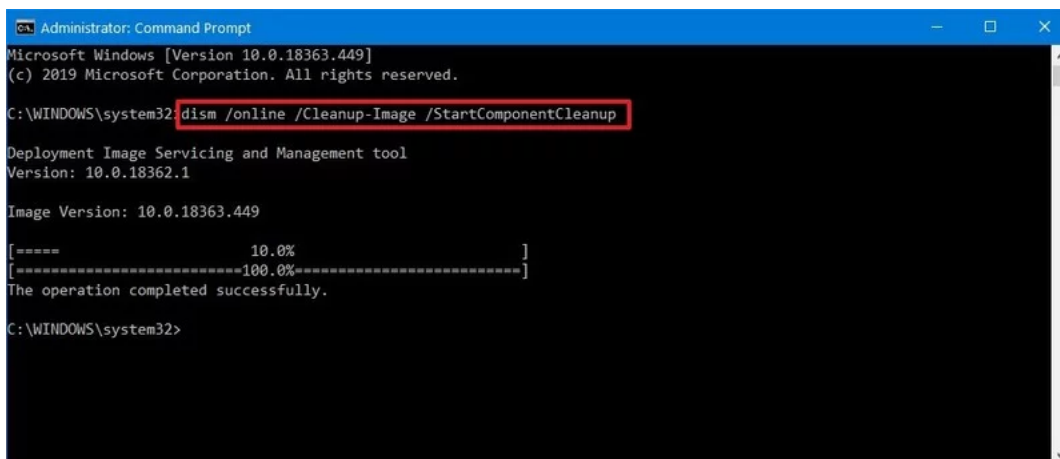
In addition, the command will return other useful information, such as how much of the components are shared with Windows 10 as well as the size for backups and disabled features, and the last time you use the cleanup tool.

Cleaning up WinSxS folder

To reduce the size of the WinSxS folder using Command Prompt, use these steps:

1. Open **Start**.
2. Search for **Command Prompt**, right-click the top result, and select the **Run as administrator** option.
3. Type the following command to determine the size of the WinSxS folder and press **Enter**:

```
dism /online /Cleanup-Image /StartComponentCleanup
```



```

Administrator: Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18363.449]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>dism /online /Cleanup-Image /StartComponentCleanup
Deployment Image Servicing and Management tool
Version: 10.0.18362.1

Image Version: 10.0.18363.449

[=====10.0%=====]
[=====100.0%=====]
The operation completed successfully.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>

```

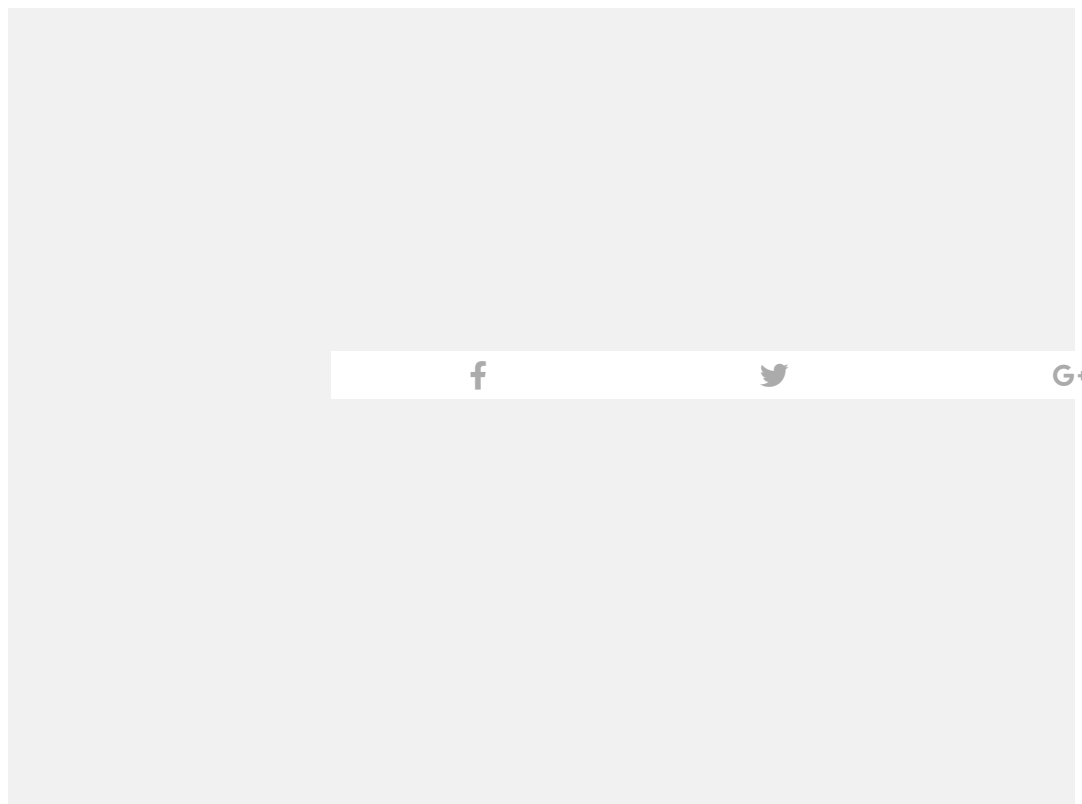
After you complete the steps, the command will run to delete those components wasting space on the hard drive. However, once the WinSxS is clean, you won't be able to roll back to a previous build until the next update.

If you want to determine how much space you have reclaimed using Command Prompt, you can re-run the command to analyze the folder and compare the "Actual Size of Component Store" values with the previous result.

How to reduce size of WinSxS folder using Storage sense

To clean up the WinSxS folder with Storage sense, use these steps:

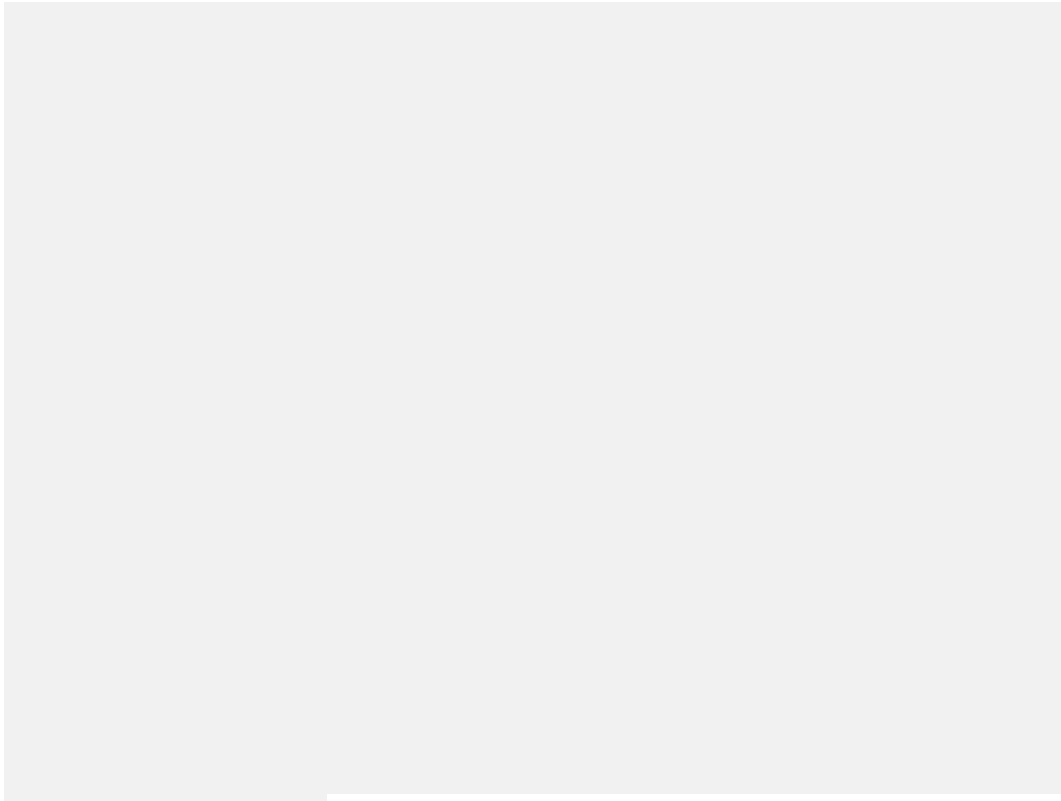
1. Open **Settings**.
2. Click on **System**.
3. Click on **Storage**.
4. Under the "Local Disk" section, click the **Temporary files** item.



Quick tip: If you don't see the item, click the Show more categories to find it.

5. Clear the default selection.
6. Check the **Windows Update Cleanup** option.





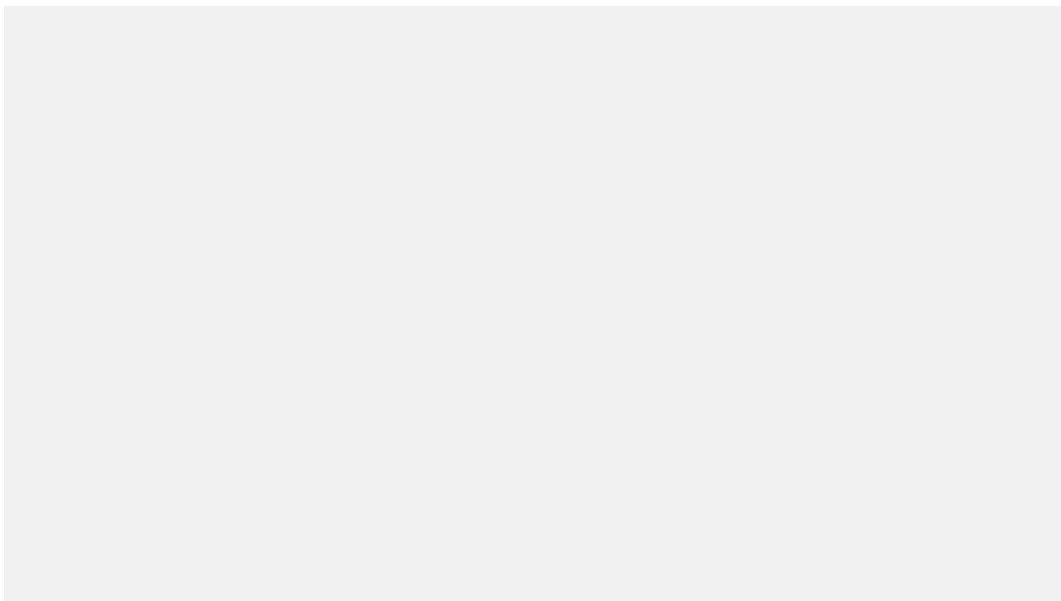
7. Click the **Remove files** option.

Once you complete the steps, the Windows Update Cleanup item will disappear from Storage sense, but it doesn't mean that the WinSxS folder is no longer available. It'll be still part of the "Windows" folder, but without the files that may unnecessarily be using space on the primary hard drive.

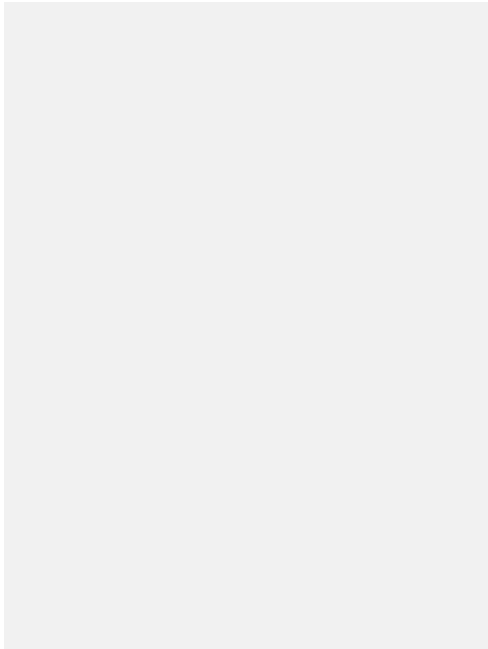
How to reduce size of WinSxS folder using Disk Cleanup

Alternatively, you can also shrink the size of the WinSxS folder with the legacy Disk Cleanup tool using these steps:

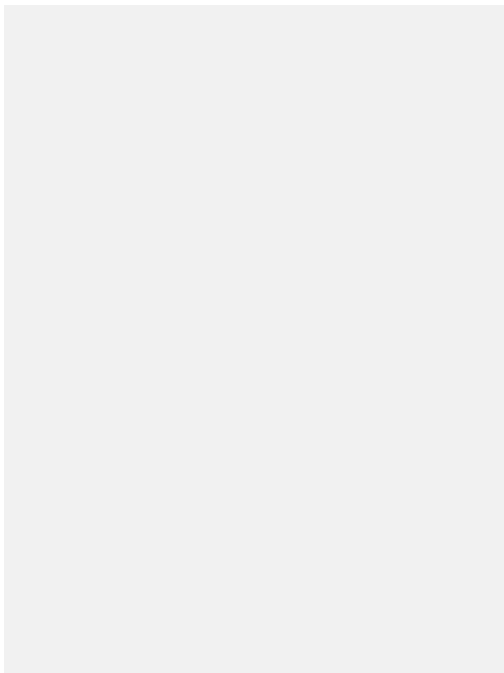
1. Open **File Explorer**.
2. Click on **This PC** from the left pane.
3. Under the "Devices and drives" section, right-click the "Local Disk" drive and select the **Properties** option.



4. Click the **General** tab.
5. Click the **Disk Cleanup** button.

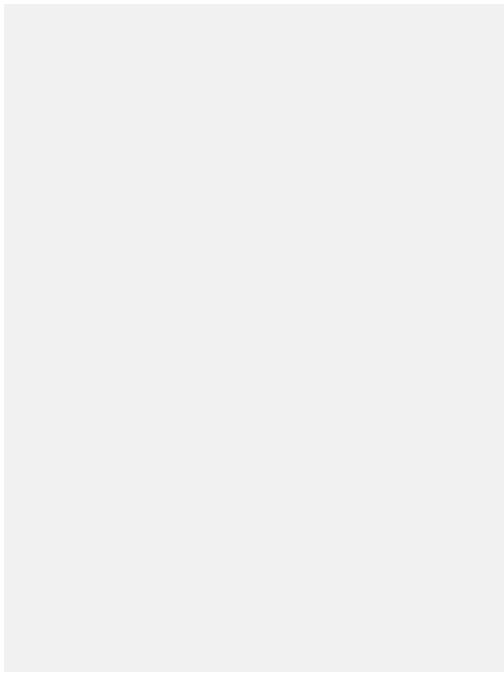


6. Click the **Clean up system files**



7. Clear the default selection.
8. Check the **Windows Update Cleanup** option.





9. Click the **OK** button.

After you complete the steps, the Disk Cleanup tool will delete all the temporary files found inside WinSxS, but without removing the folder.



While these instructions will help to reduce the footprint of WinSxS, the folder will eventually increase in size again as new updates and components become available. As part of the maintenance process, Windows 10 will try to reduce the size of the folder automatically, but you can always repeat the steps regularly to keep it as small as possible.

If you're looking for other ways to free up space on Windows 10, [check out this comprehensive guide](#) with the best tips to delete temporary files from your device.

More Windows 10 resources

For more helpful articles, coverage, and answers to common questions about Windows 10, visit the following resources:

👉 [Windows 10 on Windows Central - All you need to know](#)

👉 [Windows 10 help, tips, and tricks](#)

👉 [Windows 10 forums on Windows Central](#)

MOBILE EFFORTS

Microsoft's focus on Android and iOS is proving to be the right call

When Microsoft decided to kill Windows Phone in favor of adopting Android and iOS as first class citizens for its mobile experiences, many Windows fans were quick to assume that this plan would backfire and see Microsoft fall out of the mobile space altogether. But in 2019, that couldn't be further from the truth.

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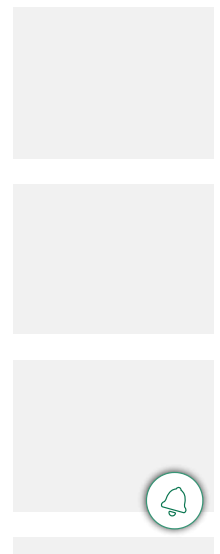
The Alienware Aurora R9, with its powerful hardware and easy-access, stylish case, is the best desktop for VR. There are, however, a bunch of other options that you might be interested in based on budget and design.

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Surface Laptop 3 13.5 review: A laptop that satisfies like no other

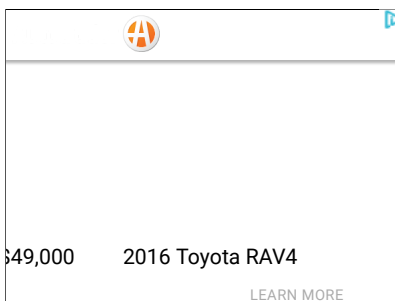
With the addition of USB Type-C, Wi-Fi 6, and Intel 10th Gen processors the Surface Laptop 3 13.5 delivers a solid follow up to the Surface Laptop 2. Between the optional Alcantara, ability to get the laptop serviced including SSD upgrades, Instant On, and the hugely improved trackpad Microsoft has created again one of the most enjoyable laptops to use. Find out more in my full review.

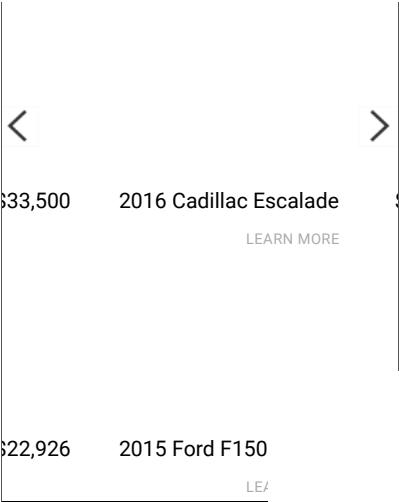
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CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

Microsoft's Windows 10 20H1 release will be first to RTM in December under Azure schedule

20H1 is Microsoft's first version of Windows 10 to be finalized under the Azure development cycle.

ZAC BOWDEN 28 Oct 2019

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What you need to know

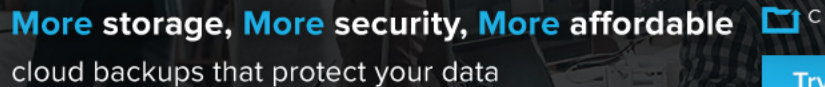
- Windows started operating under Azure's development schedule earlier this year.
- This means feature updates will now be finalized in December and June.



- **Windows 10X will RTM with 20H2 in June 2020.**

Microsoft's upcoming 20H1 release of Windows 10 will be the company's first version of the OS to be finalized in December, three months earlier than usual, as a result of Windows moving under Azure and adopting the "semester" based development cycle that Azure is already using. Mary-Jo Foley was first to reveal that the Windows dev cycle was being changed up earlier this year, but here's what this all means for Insiders.

In the past, Windows 10 feature updates were typically finalized in March and September, but now, these OS releases are expected to be done in December and June instead. This doesn't mean Microsoft is giving feature updates less development time; this is just a result of Microsoft outright shifting the development cycle of Windows 10 updates by two to three months. Each release still gets the usual seven to nine months in development.

An advertisement for OneDrive cloud backups. It features a dark background with a person's face partially visible. The text reads "More storage, More security, More affordable" in white, followed by "cloud backups that protect your data" in a smaller font. There is a blue "Try" button on the right.

Microsoft was able to make this change thanks to a decision it made when first moving Windows under Azure. To allow the Azure and Windows development schedules to align, it needed to skip a feature release. Windows 10's 19H2 release is the result of this, being an update that isn't a proper OS release like previous ones before it.

This means Windows 10's 20H1 release is just about done. It was marked as feature-complete internally back in August, and Microsoft has been mostly focused on fixing up bugs and polishing the OS for release ever since. This is why Insiders have not seen any substantial new features in 20H1 builds for a couple of months, because the 20H1 release is done. We've got a month or so left of development before Microsoft signs-off on 20H1 in mid-l



Windows 10 20H2

Source: Microsoft

This also means that work on the next Windows 10 feature update after 20H1, known as 20H2 or "Manganese" has already started development internally, and Insiders should begin receiving 20H2 builds in the next couple of weeks. On this new development cycle, 20H2 will RTM in June 2020. This is important, as this release will play a vital role in the availability of Windows 10X on new foldable PCs expected to start shipping in fall 2020.



Now that 20H2 can RTM earlier in the year under the new dev schedule, Microsoft can use 20H2 as the shipping version of Windows 10X that's preloaded onto devices like the Surface Neo. This means Windows 10X will RTM in June alongside 20H2, and not with 20H1 as we had initially assumed. Microsoft needs the extra development time to make sure Windows 10X is as good as it can be at launch.

Regarding desktop releases, does this mean new feature updates will be made available to the public earlier than previously? Right now, I'm not too sure. As 20H1 will be done in December, Microsoft could start shipping the update to the public as early as January, but none of my sources seem to be clear if that's actually what's happening. Microsoft may decide to keep pushing out new feature updates in the spring and fall, utilizing the Slow and Release Preview ring for extensive testing of the final build before it goes to the public.

Either way, Windows is now operating under Azure's development schedule, and that means we can expect to see new feature updates finalized earlier than we've seen in the past. What are your thoughts on these changes? Let us know in the comments.

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Zac Bowden

Zac Bowden is a Senior Editor at Windows Central. Bringing you exclusive coverage into the world of Windows 10 on PCs, tablets, phones, and more. Also an avid collector of rare Microsoft prototype devices! Keep in touch on Twitter: @zacbowden.

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