What Is Windows S Mode?

If you recently got a new Windows computer or laptop, you might have noticed that you can't install certain apps. This could happen if you are running Windows S Mode. But what is Windows S Mode, and what does it do? Here's everything you need to know about S Mode and how to turn it off on your Windows PC.

What Is Windows S Mode?

S Mode is a configuration of Windows (like Windows Home or Windows Pro) designed to give you faster boot times, better security, and a longer battery life. However, with S Mode enabled, you can only use certain web browsers, and you can only download apps from the Microsoft Store.

Many new laptops will come with Windows S Mode enabled, but you can always disable it at any time. This will simply revert your computer to Windows Home, Pro, or whatever version came preinstalled. However, once you disable S Mode, you cannot go back.

According to Microsoft, Windows S Mode "delivers predictable performance and quality." So, you might want to keep S Mode enabled if you only use your computer for basic tasks, and you care more about speed and security than customizing your PC.

Should You Turn Off Windows S Mode?

You might want to turn off Windows S Mode if you need to download any third-party apps, use unsupported peripheral devices, or change certain settings. Basically, if you're a "power user," you'll have more ways to customize your PC after disabling S Mode.

You can only use Edge & Bing: When you're in Windows S Mode, you can only use the Edge browser. That means you won't be able to use Chrome, Firefox, or other browsers. Also, the default search engine will always be Bing, so you'll have to go to Google.com manually every time you want to use that search engine.

No third-party apps: Windows S Mode only lets you download apps from the Microsoft Store. If you try to install an app that is not on the Microsoft Store, you will see a pop-up window that blocks you from using it.

Limited support for accessories: Windows S Mode only lets you use certain computer peripherals, such as printers, webcams, and wireless mice.

How to Turn Off S Mode on Windows

To turn off S Mode on a Windows 10 or 11 PC, click the Start button and go to Settings > Update & Security > Activation. Select Go to the Store and click Get under the Switch out of S Mode panel. Then click Install and wait for the process to finish.

Note: Switching out of S Mode is a one-way process. Once you've switched out, there's no going back. So, make sure that you want to disable S Mode for good before you proceed.