

Note: OEM System Builder Software is unsuitable for sale to consumer customers.

Retail vs. OEM

The biggest difference between a retail and OEM product is how warranties are handled. Most retail products come with very well defined terms for service and support in case the product has any problems. OEM products on the other hand will generally have shorter warranties and limited support. The reason is that the OEM product is supposed to be sold as part of a package via a retailer. As a user who is building a computer system or upgrading a computer system, the retail version may also be important. If you are unfamiliar with what is required to install the component into the computer system, the manufacturer instructions can be very useful as are any cables that you may not have.

OEM Software

Like hardware, software can also be purchased as OEM. OEM software is identical to the full retail versions of the software but it lacks any packaging. Typically this will be seen with software items such as operating systems and office suites. Unlike OEM hardware, there are more restrictions on what will allow the software to be sold by a retailer to a consumer.

When you can buy OEM software

OEM software is designed for system builders. It typically can only be purchased with a complete computer system or there must be some additional purchase of hardware to go along with the OEM software.

Are OEM Products OK?

There should be no physical difference in a component if it is sold as OEM or in retail. The difference is the extras that are provided with the retail version. If the support is important to you then you need to purchase the full retail version.

HELPFUL MANUFACTURER INFO AND LINKS:

Microsoft OEM Software:

If the individual software license is a desktop operating system (including Windows XP Media Center Edition), we grant you a nonexclusive right to distribute individual software licenses; provided that each one is distributed with either (a) a fully assembled computer system or (b) a nonperipheral computer hardware component.

A “fully assembled computer system” means a computer system consisting of at least a central processing unit, a motherboard, a hard drive, a power supply, and a case.

A “nonperipheral computer hardware component” means a component that will be an integral part of the fully assembled computer system on which the individual software license will be installed.

Distribution:

Software Pre-installation

For each unit of Software in the Pack, you must pre-install one copy of the Software on a Customer System prior to distribution. If the Software includes more than one language version, you must install only one language.

Version:

"Customer System" means a fully assembled computer system that includes a CPU, a motherboard, a power supply, an internally mounted or revolving magnetic-based hard drive, and a case.