

PERSONAL TECH

Adding Features to Windows 10

Tech Tip

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Q. *I recently discovered that Windows 10 has the ability to add or remove features like the Print to PDF function. What other optional features are available on Windows 10?*

A. As with previous versions of its Windows operating system, Microsoft gives users the ability to turn off (or turn on) certain programs, apps and utilities that are not essential. These optional features will vary based on the version of Windows 10. Many of the common optional features are related to networking, system administration and software development, but a few may be of interest to other users.

To see what is available on your version of Windows, you must first get to the Windows Features box. If you prefer to go through familiar menus and screens, press the Windows and X keys and select Control Panel from the menu that pops up, or open the Control Panel from the Start Menu. In the Category View of the Control Panel screen, select Programs and under Programs and Features, choose “Turn Windows Features on or off.” (If you want to get there more quickly, press the Windows and R keys to summon the Run box, type “optional features” — without quotation marks — and press Enter.)

The Windows Features box will open to show a list of apps and programs that can be enabled or disabled. A check in the box next to an item’s name means it is

already on. (Windows will automatically turn on certain features needed for some tasks.) When you select an item, a Screen Tip caption should briefly appear to give a general description of what the feature does. These explanations can be vague, but the How-To Geek site has more detailed descriptions of many of the features and additional information can often be found by searching online.

In addition to the Microsoft Print to PDF tool, other Windows Features you may recognize include the older Internet Explorer 11, now replaced by Microsoft Edge as the default browser. You can also turn off the Media Features option for Windows Media Player, if you do not use that program for audio and video files.

Be sure you know just what you are enabling or disabling in the Windows Features box. Adding unnecessary apps can slow down a system or create security problems, while removing others can create problems with applications on your computer that may have relied on those programs.

Personal Tech invites questions about computer-based technology to techtip@nytimes.com. This column will answer questions of general interest, but letters cannot be answered individually.