

InstallShield 2026 Express Edition Release Notes

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Introduction

InstallShield is the industry standard for authoring high-quality Windows Installer-based installations.

InstallShield 2026 Express Edition also offers new features, enhancements, and resolved issues that make it easy to use the latest technologies.

Enhancements

InstallShield 2026 Express Edition includes the following enhancements:

- [InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition](#)

InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition

InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition includes the following enhancements:

- [New ISCmdBld.exe Command-Line Parameters for Configuring Custom Digital Signing](#)
- [New Microsoft Runtime and Database Prerequisites](#)

New ISCmdBld.exe Command-Line Parameters for Configuring Custom Digital Signing

InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition enhances digital signing by introducing new command-line parameters. These command-line parameters allow you specify the location of a custom signing tool, configure a custom signing tool, and control whether the build-generated file (setup.exe) must be digitally signed. These command-line parameters must be used with the ISCmdBld.exe command-line tool when building a release to ensure that the setup.exe executable is digitally signed using a required or desired custom signing tool. The following are the newly introduced command-line parameters:

- **-customsign_path <path to sign tool>**—Use this parameter to specify the location of a custom signing tool that will be used to digitally sign the build-generated file (setup.exe). For example:

`ISCmdBld.exe -customsign_path "C:\Users\Admin\Documents\sign.bat"`
- **-customsign_args <arguments>**—Use this parameter to specify the command-line argument for a custom signing tool's configuration. For example,

```
ISCmdBld.exe -p "C:\InstallShield 2026 Projects\MyProject1.ism" -sign_output "Y" -  
customsign_path "C:\Program Files (x86)\Windows  
Kits\10\bin\10.0.19041.0\x64\signtool.exe" -customsign_args "sign /v /a /fd SHA256 /tr  
http://timestamp.digicert.com /td SHA256 [filename]"
```



Important ▪ Specifying `-sign_output "Y"` is a prerequisite for using the `-customsign_path` and `-customsign_args` parameters.

The [filename] variable is a placeholder for the full path of the file to be signed. During build time, it resolves to the complete path of the binary being signed. By default, the file path is appended to the end of the argument list and passed to the custom signing tool. Instead of using a hard-coded path, you can use path variables, environment variables, or property names defined within your project.

- **-sign_output <Y/N>**—Use this parameter to specify whether the build-generated file (setup.exe) must be digitally signed. For example, use the following command line to enable digital signing:

```
ISCmdBld.exe -sign_output "Y"
```

These parameters are particularly beneficial for automated build pipelines in CI/CD environments, where the default InstallShield signing mechanism may not meet specific organizational or security requirements.

For more information, see [ISCmdBld.exe](#) in the *InstallShield Express Edition Help Library*.



Note ▪ This change was tracked in *ISDEV-44198*

New Microsoft Runtime and Database Prerequisites

InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition introduces the following new prerequisites, which are now available in the **Redistributables** explorer of the **Application Data** view:

- Microsoft Visual C++ 2017-2026 Redistributable Package (x64)
- Microsoft Visual C++ 2017-2026 Redistributable Package (x86)
- Microsoft SQL Server 2025 Redistributable (x64)

These prerequisites enable your installation to install the required Microsoft technologies on target systems, if they are not already present, ensuring that your application has the necessary runtime components for successful execution.



Note ▪ These changes were tracked in *ISDEV-45107* and *ISDEV-44984*.

Important Information

Consider the following important information regarding the InstallShield 2026 Express Edition release:

- [Concurrent License Users Must Update the FlexNet Licensing Server Software](#)
- [Evaluating InstallShield Express Edition](#)
- [Obtaining the Installations for InstallShield, InstallShield Add-Ons, and the Redistributable Files](#)
- [Installing More than One Edition of InstallShield](#)
- [Installing More than One Version of InstallShield](#)
- [Removal of Update Notifications View](#)
- [Remove .NET/J# Tab and Include MSI Engine Options from the Releases View](#)

Concurrent License Users Must Update the FlexNet Licensing Server Software

If you are using a concurrent license of InstallShield Express Edition, you must update the version of the FlexNet Licensing Server software on the licensing server before you can start using InstallShield 2026 Express Edition.

The version of the FlexNet Licensing Server software that shipped with previous versions of InstallShield Express Edition cannot manage licenses of InstallShield 2026 Express Edition. InstallShield 2026 Express Edition will not check out licenses from older versions of the license server even when those licenses are available.



Note - The FlexNet Licensing Server software v11.19.0 can manage licenses of InstallShield 2025 Express Edition and InstallShield 2026 Express Edition. Upgrading from InstallShield 2025 Express Edition to InstallShield 2026 Express Edition lets you to use the existing FlexNet Licensing Server software v11.19.0. Upgrading from the InstallShield 2021 Express Edition and older versions require the upgrading of FlexNet Licensing Server software to v11.19.0.

You can download the installer for the new FlexNet Licensing Server software from the [Reverera Product and License Center](#).

For instructions on installing the FlexNet Licensing Server software, see [Setting Up Your License Server for Concurrent Licenses](#).

Evaluating InstallShield Express Edition

If you have not purchased a license for InstallShield Express Edition, you can install it and use it for a limited number of days without activating it or connecting it to a license server. When you use InstallShield Express Edition before activating it or connecting it to a license server, it operates in evaluation mode, and some of its functionality is not available. For details, see [Functionality Notes for the Evaluation Version of InstallShield](#). Note that the evaluation limitations are removed when you activate InstallShield Express Edition or when you connect it to a license server and check out a license for it.

Obtaining the Installations for InstallShield, InstallShield Add-Ons, and the Redistributable Files

The following installations are available for download from the Reverera Software Product and License Center as documented in the [InstallShield download and licensing instructions](#):

- InstallShield
- Redistributable files (for example, InstallShield prerequisites and InstallScript objects)
- Add-ons (if you are entitled to them) such as the Standalone Build and the InstallShield MSI Tools
- FlexNet Licensing Server software (if you purchased concurrent licenses and you need to set up your organization's license server)

- Skin Customization Kit
- InstallScript Object templates
- InstallShield service packs (if available)

Installing More than One Edition of InstallShield

Only one edition of InstallShield 2026—Premier, Professional, or Express—can be installed on a system at a time. In addition, the InstallShield 2026 DIM Editor cannot be installed on the same machine with any edition of InstallShield 2026.

Microsoft Visual Studio can be integrated with only one version of InstallShield at a time. The last version of InstallShield that is installed or repaired on a system is the one that is used for Visual Studio integration.

Installing More than One Version of InstallShield

InstallShield 2026 can coexist on the same machine with other versions of InstallShield.

The InstallShield 2026 Standalone Build can coexist on the same machine with other versions of the Standalone Build. In most cases, the Standalone Build is not installed on the same machine where InstallShield is installed. If you do install both on the same machine and you want to use the automation interface, review the [Installing the Standalone Build and InstallShield on the Same Machine](#) topic in the InstallShield Help Library to learn about special registration and uninstallation considerations.

Removal of Update Notifications View

Starting InstallShield 2021 R1, Update Notifications, where you can integrate FlexNet Connect and InstallShield to check for updates, is no longer supported. The merge modules used for this integration are no longer bundled with InstallShield. If you are an existing customer using this integration, you can continue using the integration by copying the merge modules from a previous InstallShield installation. For more details, [click here](#).

Remove .NET/J# Tab and Include MSI Engine Options from the Releases View

The **.NET/J#** tab and **Include MSI Engine** options in the **Releases** explorer on the **Media** view of the **Installation Designer** were originally provided to support .NET 1.1/2.0, Windows Installer 3.1, and J# redistributables. These technologies have become obsolete and no longer supported by the Microsoft. Therefore, starting with InstallShield 2023 all editions, the **.NET/J#** tab and **Include MSI Engine** options in the **Releases** explorer on the **Media** view of the **Installation Designer** have been removed (as well as the associated .NET 1.1/2.0 Core Language and .NET 1.1/2.0 Language Packs dialog boxes). InstallShield 2023 Express Edition and later build tasks will simply ignore these options if detected in the older version of project files.

Project Upgrade Alerts

The following information describes possible upgrade issues that may occur when you upgrade projects that were created with InstallShield 2016 Express Edition and earlier to InstallShield 2026 Express Edition. It also alerts you to possible changes in behavior that you may notice between new InstallShield 2026 Express Edition projects and projects that are upgraded from InstallShield 2016 Express Edition or earlier to InstallShield 2026 Express Edition.

- [General Information about Upgrading Projects that Were Created in Earlier Versions of InstallShield Express Edition](#)
- [Changes to the List of Supported Versions of Windows for Target Systems](#)
- [Localized String Considerations](#)

General Information about Upgrading Projects that Were Created in Earlier Versions of InstallShield Express Edition

InstallShield Express Edition creates a backup copy of the project with a file extension such as .777 (for an .ism project) or .2016 (for an .issuite project) before converting it. Delete the .777 or .2016 part from the original project's file name if you want to reopen the project in the earlier version of InstallShield Express Edition. Note that you cannot open InstallShield 2026 Express Edition projects in earlier versions of InstallShield Express Edition.

You can upgrade projects that were created with the following versions of InstallShield Express Edition to InstallShield 2026 Express Edition: InstallShield 2016 Express Edition and earlier, InstallShield 12 Express Edition and earlier, InstallShield DevStudio, InstallShield Professional 7 and earlier, and InstallShield Developer 8 and earlier.

Note that projects that were created with InstallShield MultiPlatform or InstallShield Universal cannot be upgraded to InstallShield 2026 Express Edition.

Changes to the List of Supported Versions of Windows for Target Systems

For all project types, Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 R2 are the minimum versions of Windows that are required for target systems to run the installations that are created in InstallShield Express Edition.

Localized String Considerations

Changes to the handing and detection of localized strings were introduced starting in InstallShield 2016 Express Edition. For example, localized string content that includes square brackets around invalid characters can now trigger a build time warning or error. Accordingly, the following new warning and errors might occur when you are working with your installation.

Error or Warning Number	Message	Troubleshooting Information
-7355	The %4 value for string %2 does not meet validation criteria for table %1 column %3.	This warning occurs if a localized string value does not meet validation criteria for a column in the String Editor table. To resolve this warning, update the flagged value in the String Editor.
-7354	The %4 value for string %2 does not contain a legitimate value for table %1 column %3.	This error occurs if a localized string value does not contain a legitimate value in the named column of the String Editor table. To resolve this error, update the flagged value in the String Editor.

Resolved Issues

This section lists the customer issues that were resolved in the following versions of InstallShield Express Edition:

- [InstallShield 2026 R2 Express Edition](#)
- [InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition](#)

InstallShield 2026 R2 Express Edition

Issue Number	Issue Summary
ISDEV-45220	Adding IgnoreTmpRename="1" to the prerequisite definitions failed to suppress reboot detection, triggered by the PendingFileRenameOperations registry value, during execution of custom .NET 10.0.5 prerequisites. This issue has been fixed.

InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition

The following issues have been resolved in InstallShield 2026 R1 Express Edition:

Issue Number	Issue Summary
ISDEV-44981	A security vulnerability was observed in the InstallShield 2023 R2 kit. The issue caused a standard user to execute actions that resulted in elevated privileges (SYSTEM-level access), thereby compromising the security of the target system. This issue has been fixed.
ISDEV-44875	Using the <code>setup.exe/tempextractpath"C:\IS_temp"</code> command failed to extract and add the PowerShell script files to the specified custom directory. Instead, those files were extracted to the Windows default temp directory. This issue has been fixed.
ISDEV-44748	On a Window 11 24H2 machine, an issue was observed where printing the License Agreement failed with the following error message displayed: This file does not have an app associated with it for performing this action. Please install an app or, if one is already installed, create an association in the Default Apps Settings page. This issue has been fixed.
ISDEV-45170	An issue was observed where <code>setup.exe</code> failed to recognize and process command-line arguments when launched from a mapped network drive (for example, X: \). Consequently, installation parameters provided through the command line, such as silent installation switches and custom configuration options, were ignored. This issue has been fixed.
ISDEV-44759	Reordering subfeatures of a feature in the Setup Design view failed to save when the subfeatures were configured with the Display setting configured to Not Visible and the Advertised setting configured to Disallow Advertise . This issue has been fixed.
ISDEV-45022	An installer failed to execute a prerequisite from the <code>/temp</code> directory where the installer files were extracted and instead attempted to execute it from a hard-coded path. This issue has been fixed.

System Requirements

This section contains the minimum requirements for systems that run InstallShield Express Edition (the authoring environment), as well as for target systems that run the installations created with InstallShield Express Edition (the run-time environment).

- [For Systems Running InstallShield Express Edition](#)
- [For Target Systems](#)

For Systems Running InstallShield Express Edition

InstallShield Express Edition runs on the latest versions of these operating systems, fully updated with the most recent patches and service packs.

Item	Description
Processor	Pentium III-class PC (500 MHz or higher recommended)
RAM	1 GB of RAM (2 GB preferred)
Hard Disk	1 GB free space
Display	Designed for XGA resolution at 1024 × 768 or higher
Operating System	• Windows Server 2012 R2 • Windows 10 • Windows Server 2016 • Windows Server 2019 • Windows 11 • Windows Server 2022 • Windows Server 2025
Privileges	Administrative privileges on the system
Mouse	Microsoft IntelliMouse or other compatible pointing device
Optional Integration with Visual Studio	The following versions of Microsoft Visual Studio can be integrated with InstallShield Premier or Professional Editions • Visual Studio 2012 • Visual Studio 2013 • Visual Studio 2015 • Visual Studio 2017 • Visual Studio 2019 • Visual Studio 2022 The following editions of these versions of Visual Studio can be integrated with InstallShield Premier or Professional Editions: • Professional • Premium • Ultimate • Enterprise

For Target Systems

Target systems must meet the following minimum operating system requirements:

- Windows 7
- Windows Server 2008 R2
- Windows 8
- Windows Server 2012
- Windows Server 8.1
- Windows Server 2012 R2
- Windows 10
- Windows Server 2016
- Windows Server 2019
- Windows 11
- Windows Server 2022
- Windows Server 2025

Target systems must also support the SSE2 instruction set.

Known Issues

There are no known issues in InstallShield 2026 Express Edition.

Legal Information

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