

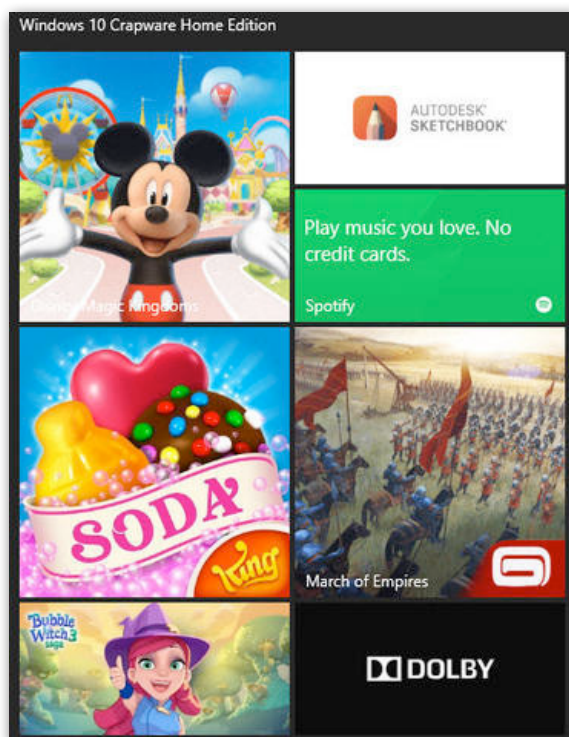


HOW TO AVOID INSTALLING WINDOWS 10 CRAPWARE

By Ed Bott

INTRODUCTION

When you install Windows 10 Pro on a new PC and sign in with a local account or a Microsoft account, you get access to all the professional features that you'd expect from a business-class PC operating system. You also get some unexpected apps splattered onto your Start menu whether you want them or not, including Candy Crush Soda Saga, Bubble Witch 3 Saga, and March of Empires.



THESE APPS APPEAR WHEN YOU SIGN INTO WINDOWS 10 HOME OR PRO WITH A LOCAL OR MICROSOFT ACCOUNT.

The screenshot shows the apps that were pushed to my PC after I installed a near final build of Windows 10 Pro, version 1803, and signed in with a local account.

In addition to those three games, Windows 10 downloaded Disney's Magic Kingdoms, Autodesk SketchBook, Dolby Access (offering a free trial of the Atmos surround-sound technology, with the option to pay \$15 after the trial period ends), and Spotify Music.

If you're staring at that assortment of apps on a business PC and thinking it looks a lot like crapware, I'm not going to argue with you.

Those apps are preinstalled for purely financial reasons, with the app developers and Microsoft banking on the fact that some percentage of Windows 10 customers will run each app and pay for some sort of extra, like a Spotify music subscription. Microsoft, of course, gets a piece of the action.

Don't say that they didn't warn you. In every quarterly and annual report since mid-2015, Microsoft has reminded shareholders and customers that its business plan for Windows 10 includes "new post-license monetization opportunities beyond initial license revenues."

This is a particularly in-your-face example of that [monetization strategy](#).

It's also unfortunate that Microsoft is resorting to some of the same [behavior it criticized its OEM partners](#) for a few years ago.

All of those apps can be uninstalled fairly easily, of course. Because they're Store apps, they can't install performance-damaging system files or run processes at startup. Aside from consuming a few megabytes of storage, these preinstalled apps don't even have a trivial impact on system performance.

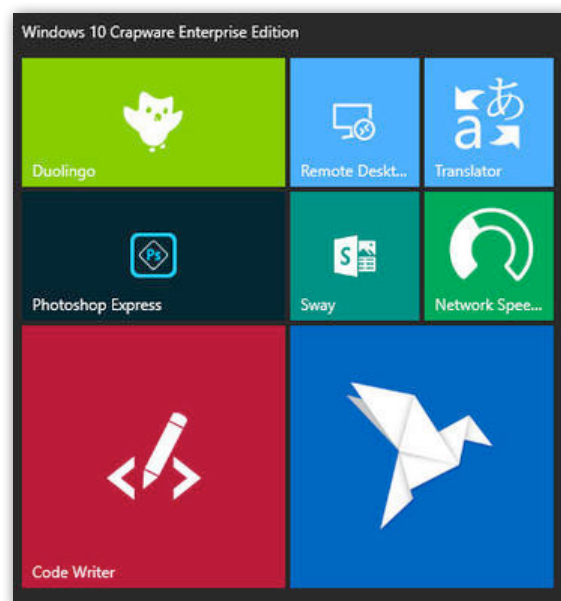
But it's still annoying that those decidedly un-businesslike game icons have to be removed manually after you've paid a \$100 upcharge for Windows 10 Pro.

PREVENTING INSTALLATION

So how do you avoid having that assortment of apps installed in the first place? Two options are fully supported; not surprisingly, each assumes that you're paying Microsoft for an additional business product or service.

- **Option 1:** Install Windows 10 Enterprise and sign in with any account type. If you don't have a Windows Volume License subscription, you can pay \$7 per month for an E3 subscription.
- **Option 2:** Install Windows 10 Pro and sign in using either Active Directory credentials on a Windows domain or Azure Active Directory credentials, such as those associated with an Office 365 Business or Enterprise subscription.

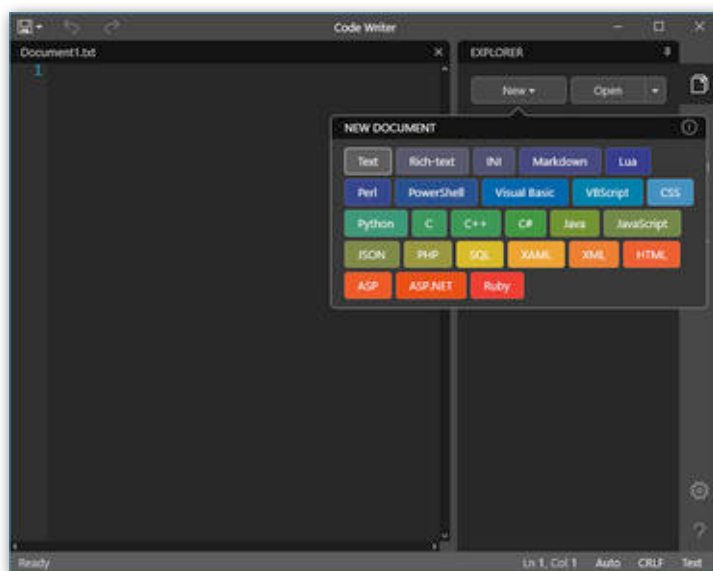
Using either of those options results in a different set of additional apps being installed.



INSTEAD OF GAMES, YOU GET THESE PRODUCTIVITY APPS WHEN YOU USE AN ENTERPRISE EDITION OR AN ORGANIZATION ACCOUNT.

There is, of course, a theoretical anti-crapware argument that opposes *any* additional apps being installed as part of setting up a new account. But this assortment, at least, feels like it has more of an emphasis on productivity.

Of the eight apps, three were developed by Microsoft and are free: Remote Desktop, Bing Translator, and Office Sway. The others are a grab bag of utilities and productivity tools: Adobe Photoshop Express; Network Speed Test; Eclipse Manager, a free project tracker that offers a \$1.99 a month Eclipse Pro subscription; Code Writer, a free text and code editor; and the language learning tool Duolingo.



THE FREE CODE WRITER EDITOR IS INSTALLED AUTOMATICALLY ON ENTERPRISE, DOMAIN, AND AZURE AD INSTALLATIONS.

If you have an older Windows 10 version than 1803, you might see Power BI (another Microsoft product) or Pandora.

As with the consumer-focused apps, you can uninstall or hide these extra apps with just a few clicks: Scroll through the Apps list on the Start menu until you find the icon of the unwanted app and then right-click that icon and click Uninstall.

If you're deploying Windows 10 Pro or Enterprise in a large organization, you have access to specialized tools that let you build a custom image with only the apps you want your users to have. But those without a crew of IT overlords will just have to stay on the lookout for new crapware variants.

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