



Windows 10 Stopper - GWX Control Panel -

Der "GWX Control Panel" ist ein simples, aber praktisches Tool. Die nervige Werbung unter Windows 7, Windows 8 sowie 8.1 für das kostenlose Upgrade lässt sich bequem mit einem Klick deaktivieren. Da man auch das Upgrade-Symbol manuell deaktivieren kann, ist dieses Tool vor allem für Windows-Laien gut geeignet.

Mit dem kostenlosen Tool "GWX Control Panel" blenden Sie unter Windows 7, Windows 8 sowie 8.1 das Windows-Upgrade-Symbol in der Taskleiste aus.



GWX Control Panel (GWX Stopper) Mit dem kostenlosen "GWX Control Panel" (ehemals "GWX Stopper") blenden Windows-User, die Ihr System noch nicht auf Windows 10 geupdated haben, das Windows-Upgrade-Symbol in der Taskleiste aus. Praktisch für alle Nutzer, die sich aktiv gegen ein Upgrade auf Windows 10 entscheiden und nicht weiter genervt werden wollen. Der User hat zudem die Möglichkeit, das Symbol kurzzeitig oder für immer zu deaktivieren.

GWX Control Panel - kostenloses Upgrade ausblenden

Microsoft versucht jeden Windows-User auf sein neues Betriebssystem [Windows 10](#) upzudaten, indem in der Taskleiste das Windows 10-Symbol nicht ausgeblendet wird. Doch nicht jeder will - aus diversen Gründen - das neue Update herunterladen. Der "GWX Control Panel" deaktiviert nach der Installation vollautomatisch das lästige Symbol im System-Tray.

Wollen Sie das Symbol aus dem System-Tray manuell unterdrücken, so können Sie dies in unseren [Praxistipps](#) nachlesen.

Quelle: http://www.chip.de/downloads/GWX-Stopper-Windows-10-Update-Icon-deaktivieren_82717452.html



[Using GWX Control Panel \(formerly GWX Stopper\) to Permanently Remove the 'Get Windows 10' Icon](#)

GWX Control Panel (previously named GWX Stopper) is a free program that you can use to do the following on Windows 7 and Windows 8:

- Remove the "Get Windows 10" icon that appears in your notification area.
- Prevent your Windows Update control panel from upgrading your computer to Windows 10.
- Prevent your computer from secretly downloading Windows 10 installation files.
- Detect and remove the hidden Windows 10 installation files if they're already on your PC.

GWX Control Panel really works, is safe and easy to use, and gives you the option to re-enable the icon and upgrade notifications if you're ever ready to move forward with Windows 10.

UPDATE (November 1, 2015): Due to popular demand, version 1.5 of the program now includes the ability to delete the hidden Windows 10 installation folders (Windows.~BT and Windows.~WS). There are a few other features intended to improve the user experience and assist tech support staff who use GWX Control Panel to remotely help customers. There was a LOT of under-the-hood work done in this release- please let me know in the comments or on the [Ultimate Outsider Facebook page](#) if you see unexpected behavior.



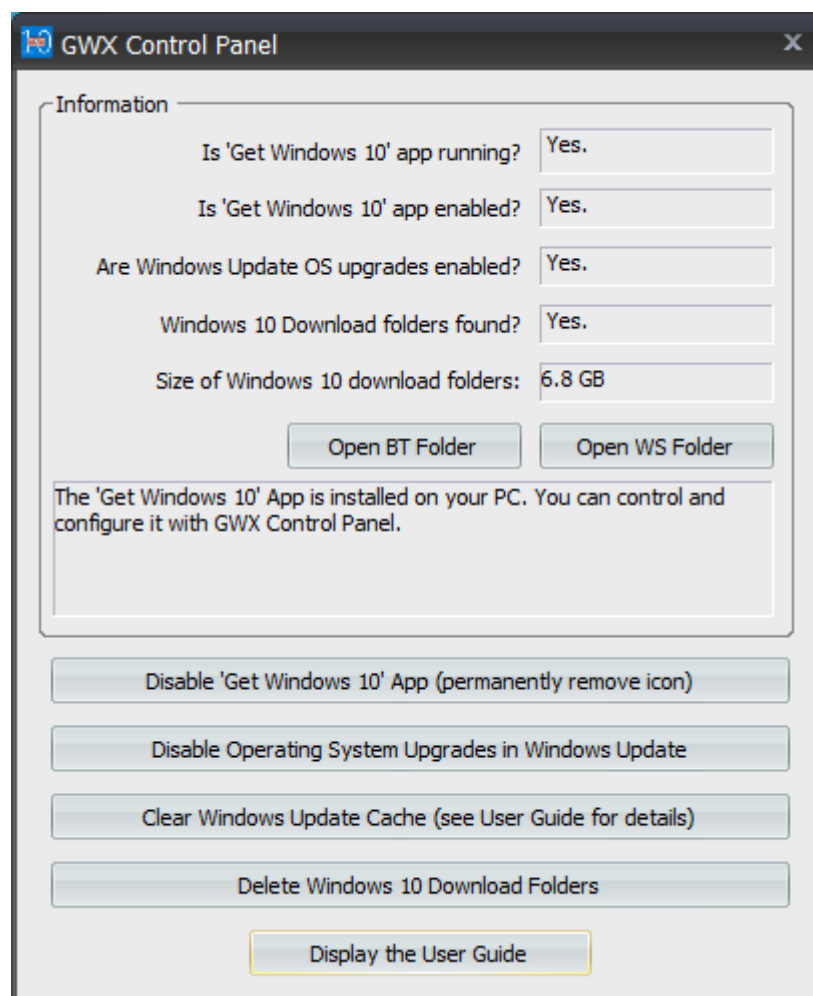
DOWNLOADING AND USING GWX CONTROL PANEL



I posted a [quick video tutorial for GWX Control Panel 1.1](#) at YouTube. There's also [another tutorial](#) that covers the new features in versions 1.2 and 1.3.

And here are the full written instructions for the current version:

1. Download the latest version of GWX Control Panel from the [Ultimate Outsider Downloads](#) page and then launch it. There is no installer.
2. The first time you run GWX Control Panel, it presents you with the *End User License Agreement* screen. In order to proceed with the program, please acknowledge the license by selecting **I accept the terms of this agreement** and then clicking **Continue**. You won't see this screen again unless you decline the license agreement and run the program later on.
3. If you accepted the license you should now see the main GWX Control Panel screen:



If you would like to permanently remove the icon from the system tray, click **Disable 'Get Windows 10' App**. This will remove the icon and prevent it from appearing without your consent again.

Note 1

If one or more of the buttons is disabled, please see the *Questions and Answers* section below for a detailed explanation of the user interface.



Note 2

If you ever see a dialog box that says "**Do you want to allow the following program to make changes to this computer?**" please click **Yes**. (The program can't continue unless you do.) If you'd like to know why this dialog box appears, please see the *Questions and Answers* section below.

4. If you discover that your Windows Update control panel has changed so that it now says "Upgrade to Windows 10" and automatically selects the optional "Upgrade to Windows 10" update for installation, you can now stop this behavior by clicking **Disable Operating System Upgrades in Windows Update** in GWX Control Panel.

The **Clear Windows Update Cache** feature can help with some particularly difficult Windows Update issues, but should not be necessary for most users. Please see the "*what should i know about the 'clear windows update cache' feature?*" section before using this feature.

5. If GWX Control Panel indicates that it found one or more of the hidden Windows 10 download directories, beginning with version 1.5 of the program, you can use the **Delete Windows 10 Download Folders** to remove the files, freeing up storage space.
6. If the time comes when you feel ready to pursue Windows 10, just run GWX Control Panel again, and then click **Enable 'Get Windows 10' App**. The icon will appear in your system tray immediately, and you can then click it for information on how to obtain your copy of Windows 10. (Alternatively, if you do a web search for "Installing Windows 10 using the media creation tool" you can find a way to upgrade to Windows 10 without dealing with the 'Get Windows 10' app at all.)

Note

Since GWX Control Panel doesn't use an installer, it will initially be located wherever your browser normally downloads files. So if you're not sure where to find the **GWX_control_panel.exe** file, check your personal Downloads folder first.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHAT DO THE VARIOUS FIELDS IN THE INFORMATION AREA MEAN?

Once GWX Control Panel is loaded it immediately begins monitoring your system for the presence and current settings of the Get Windows 10 app. The program provides you two pieces of information:

Is 'Get Windows 10' app running?

- If the Get Windows 10 app is installed on your system and currently running, this says **Yes**.
- If the app is installed but not currently running, this says **No**.
- If the app cannot be located on your computer, this says **(App not found.)**

Is 'Get Windows 10' app enabled?



- If the Get Windows 10 app is installed and configured to load at Windows startup and remind you about the Windows 10 upgrade, this says **Yes**.

Note: This field can potentially read **Yes** even if the icon is not currently visible in your notification area or the app not currently running. The purpose of this field is to indicate whether the app is capable of running and displaying itself when launched.

- If the app is installed but configured to remain silent even after you restart Windows, this says **No**.
- If the app cannot be located on your computer, this says **(App not found.)**

Are Windows Update OS upgrades enabled? (New in version 1.2)

- If Windows is configured to allow the Windows Update control panel to automatically select the optional Upgrade to Windows 10 update (which can happen even after you explicitly cancel your Windows 10 upgrade reservation), this field says **Yes**. Beginning in version 1.4, a reading of Yes can indicate that GWX Control Panel found evidence that your computer is vulnerable to unexpected Windows Update behaviors. We're taking a "better safe than sorry" approach.



*If Windows Update keeps trying to get you to upgrade to Windows 10, the '**Are Windows Update OS upgrades enabled**' field in GWX Control Panel says **Yes**.*

- If Windows is configured to enforce normal Windows Update behavior (no automatic OS upgrades), this field says **No**.

Note

Beginning with version 1.3, GWX Control Panel now does even more detection to see if Windows is configured to allow automatic Windows 10 upgrades.

Windows 10 folders found? (New in version 1.3)

Depending on how up-to-date your Windows 7 or Windows 8 installation is in terms of your Windows Updates, Windows might have [already started downloading some installation files](#) for Windows 10 onto your PC, even if you haven't opted in for an upgrade yet. Most users won't even notice the files are there because Windows places them inside hidden folders on your system drive. (You have to enable "**Show hidden files, folders, and drives**" in the **Folder Options** control panel in order to see the folders in Windows Explorer. The folders are named \$Windows.~BT and \$Windows.~WS.)



- If GWX Control Panel locates one or more hidden Windows 10 installation folders on your hard drive, this field says **Yes**.
- If GWX Control Panel cannot locate any of the folders, this field says **No**.

Size of Windows 10 download folders (New in version 1.3)

- If GWX Control Panel locates the hidden Windows 10 installation folders (see above) on your hard drive, this field indicates the total size of all files found in the folders. If the folders are very small (like around 140 megabytes/MB), it might mean that Windows only downloaded some preliminary setup files to your computer, and hasn't actually begun downloading the full operating system installer. The complete installation folder will be several gigabytes/GB in size.
- If GWX Control Panel cannot locate the folders, this field says **(not found)**.

Open BT Folder and Open WS Folder (New in version 1.3 and 1.5, respectively)

- If GWX Control Panel locates the hidden \$Windows.~BT folder on your hard drive, the **Open BT Folder** button is available, and clicking it will open the folder in Windows Explorer so that you can inspect its contents.
- Likewise, the **Open WS Folder** button is enabled when the hidden \$Windows.~WS folder is present.
- If GWX Control Panel cannot locate a specific directory, its respective **Open** button will not be enabled.

WHAT DO THE BUTTONS DO?

Here's a complete description of what the buttons do, and when:

Disable/Enable 'Get Windows 10' App (permanently remove/restore icon)

- If the Get Windows 10 app is installed and enabled, this button says **Disable 'Get Windows 10' App**, and clicking it will both close the app if it is currently running and configure it to stop reminding you about Windows 10. This setting will persist even after you restart Windows, until you use GWX Control Panel again to re-enable the app.
- If the Get Windows 10 app is installed and disabled, this button says **Enable 'Get Windows 10' App**, and clicking it will both launch the app and configure it to remind you about the Windows 10 upgrade. This setting persists even after you restart Windows, and will remain in effect until you use GWX Control Panel to disable the app.
- If the Get Windows 10 app is not installed, this button is not available.

Disable/Enable Operating System Upgrades in Windows Update (new in version 1.2)

- If Windows is configured to allow Windows Update to automatically select the optional Upgrade to Windows 10 update, this button says "**Disable...**" and clicking it will restore Windows Update to its normal behavior.
- If Windows is configured to behave normally (in other words, to only install important patches, rather than to upgrade the operating system), this button says "**Enable...**" and clicking it will allow Windows Update to select the Upgrade to Windows 10 update when it becomes available. (Note that Windows can do this even after you cancel your Windows 10 upgrade reservation.)

Note: To ensure that this setting fully takes effect, you may be prompted to restart Windows after making changes.



Clear Windows Update Cache (see User Guide for Details) (new in version 1.4)

- If the **Disable Operating System Upgrades in Windows Update** feature followed by a system restart doesn't seem to fix the problems you're having with Windows Update, this feature might help you. This has some one-time effects in your Windows Update control panel that you might want to be aware of before you proceed. When you first click this button, the program will describe each of these effects and give you the chance to cancel if you decide you'd rather not proceed.

Please see the following answer to "*What should I know about the 'Clear Windows Update Cache' feature?*" for further information on the subject.

Delete Windows 10 Download Folders (new in version 1.5)

- If any of the hidden Windows 10 installation folders are found, this button is available. Clicking it will first display a confirmation dialog box explaining that you're about to permanently delete the hidden files. If you choose to proceed, the status box in the **Information** section of GWX Control Panel will indicate what is happening. The process can take a couple of minutes, depending on how many files are found, how fast your computer is, and what kind of storage device you're using for a system drive. Once GWX Control Panel actually starts deleting files, you will notice the **Size of Windows 10 folders** field reporting smaller and smaller sizes (I find it quite satisfying to watch), and the "Open Folder" buttons will be disabled as the top-level folders are removed.

Display the User Guide

- This button launches your browser to display this user guide.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THE 'CLEAR WINDOWS UPDATE CACHE' FEATURE?

You should only use the **Clear Windows Update Cache** feature if the **Disable Operating System Upgrades** feature (followed by a system restart) didn't fix the Windows 10-related problems you were having. While my own testing (and some public beta testing) has shown this procedure to be safe, it has the following immediate effects:

1. The first time you view the Windows Update screen, it will look as if you had never previously run an update.
2. The first time you check for new updates, it will take longer than normal, since Windows has to download some additional one-time information.
3. The "view update history" list will be empty, and only new updates you install from this point on will appear on it.

Note: Your list of actual "installed updates" will **not** be empty, and previously installed updates can still be uninstalled.

4. Any updates you had previously hidden with the "Hide update" feature of Windows Update will have to be re-hidden if you no longer wish for them to appear in your lists of available updates.



While all of these effects are only temporary, they also cannot be undone. Beginning with version 1.5, the program lists the above one-time effects and gives you a chance to cancel or proceed. I go into my usual excessive detail below...

The **Disable Operating System Upgrades in Windows Update** feature puts the correct settings in place to keep your control panel from being hijacked by the Windows 10 Upgrade, and that alone (followed by a Windows restart) should be enough for most people. Sometimes, however, the Windows Update subsystem needs to be refreshed in order to display the correct updates, so that's what **Clear Windows Update Cache** is for.

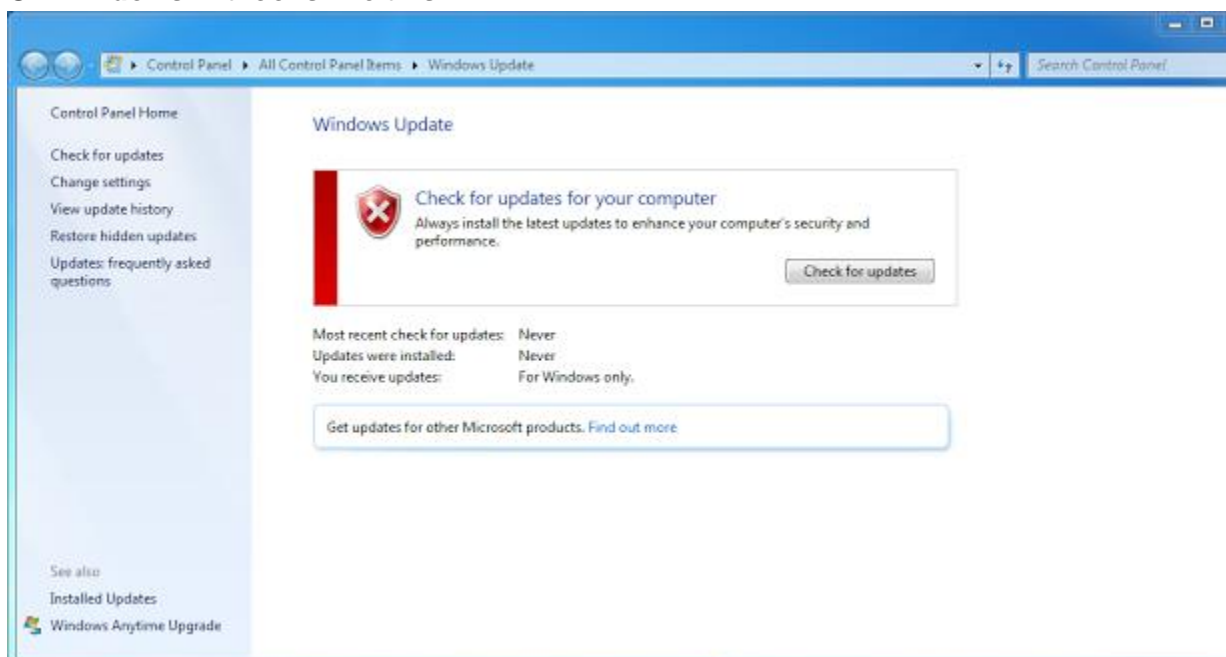
When you click the button, GWX Control Panel checks to see if you currently have any "pending updates" waiting for a system restart in order to complete, and it will ask if you're sure you'd like to proceed.

- If you haven't restarted Windows in a while, you should probably click **No** when you see this message. GWX Control Panel will then ask if you'd like to restart Windows to let the pending updates complete installation.
- If you just restarted Windows after using the **Disable Operating System Upgrades** feature and you still get this message, this warning is probably a false alarm resulting from some mismatched files in your Windows Update cache. You can safely click **Yes** to proceed.
- Likewise if you just restarted Windows in response to GWX Control Panel indicating that you had pending updates and you're still seeing this message, it is likely a false alarm and you can safely click **Yes**.

Clearing the update cache only takes a few seconds. Upon completion, the information area reports "Operation complete" and indicates how many cache files were deleted.

The next time you open the Windows Update control panel, you'll find that it behaves as if it's being displayed for the very first time.

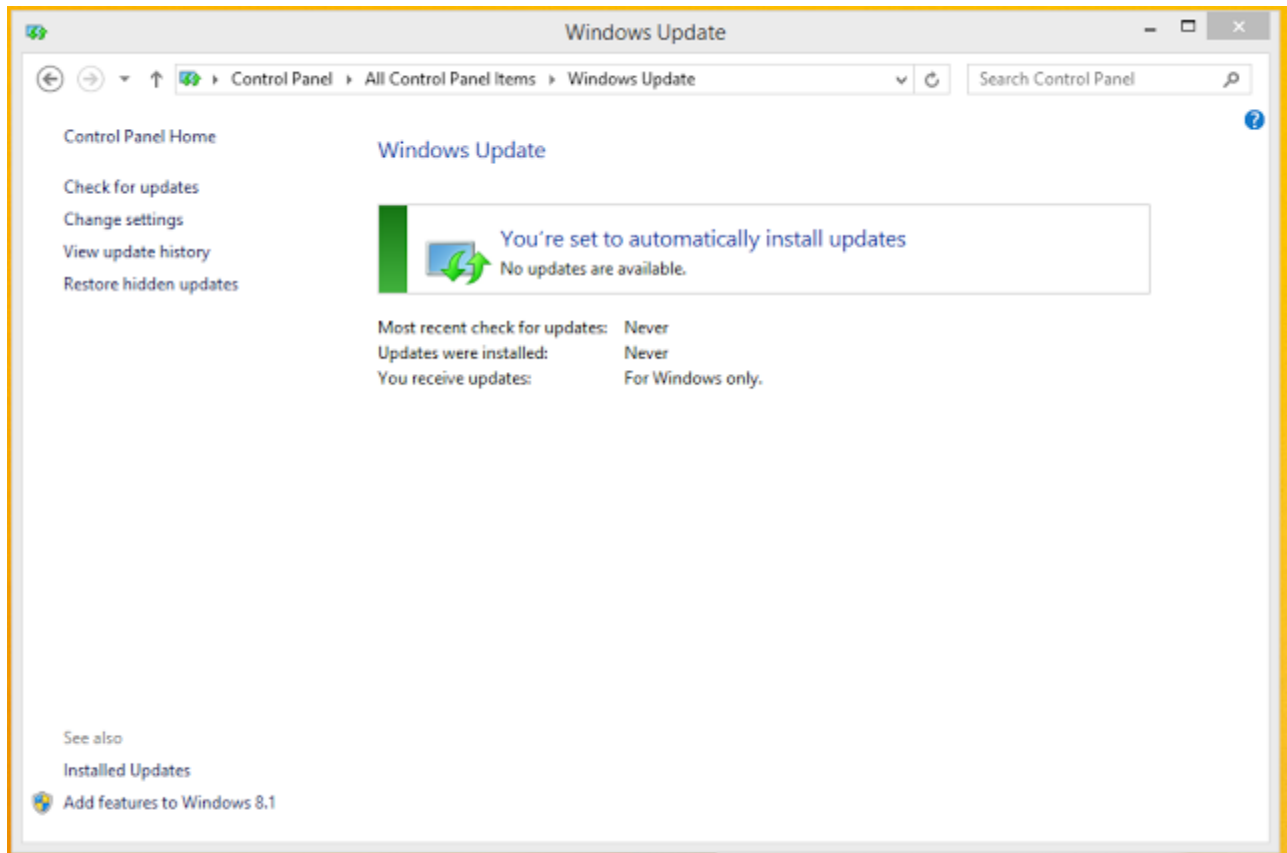
On Windows 7 it looks like this:





Don't be alarmed by the red X!

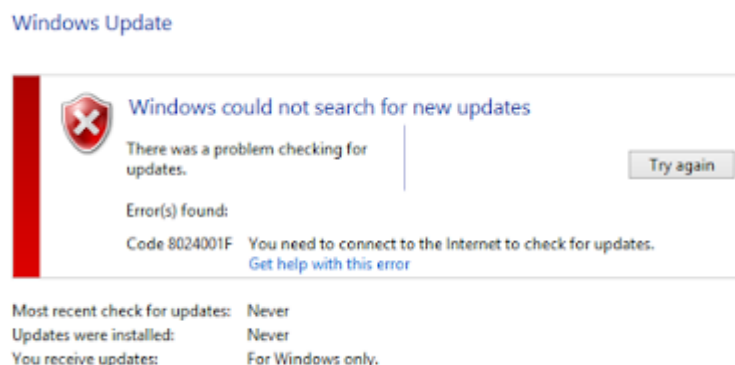
On Windows 8 it looks like this:



The first time you click **Check for updates**, it will take Windows longer than usual to download information on available updates. This is to be expected, and only happens the first time you check for updates after clearing your cache.

You may want to take a look at the specific updates available to you, because clearing the cache also clears out any record of updates you have explicitly hidden in the past. If you want certain updates to remain hidden, look for them under your important and optional updates and re-hide them. (Thanks to commenter Jim for the reminder!)

The first time you try to check for updates you *might* possibly see an error message like this:



I've only seen it happen once, and a system restart was apparently all it took to get Windows Update working again. (I'm actually not certain the message had anything to do with clearing



the cache- I think it was a Wi-Fi problem... but so far I haven't had any issues that couldn't be fixed by restarting Windows and trying again.)

WHY CAN'T I CLICK ONE OR MORE OF THE BUTTONS?

The buttons become available or unavailable depending on the current state of the 'Get Windows 10' app on your computer. See the answer for "*What do the buttons do?*" to learn when they're unavailable.

WHY DOES IT SAY THE WINDOWS 10 APP IS RUNNING OR ENABLED WHEN I DON'T SEE THE ICON? OR, WHY DOES IT SAY WINDOWS UPDATE OS UPGRADES ARE ENABLED WHEN MY WINDOWS UPDATES CONTROL PANEL LOOKS NORMAL?

It is possible for the GWX app to be running but not actually displaying its icon. This is a result of various settings on your PC and the program's own internal rules/behaviors. Trust me, though, if GWX Control Panel says the app is running, it *is* running.

Similarly, since the GWX app runs as a result of Windows scheduling and its own settings and rules, it is possible for the app to be installed and enabled on your PC but not currently running.

Finally, beginning with version 1.3 and continuing with 1.4, the "OS upgrades enabled" field can indicate that one or more of about ten different Windows settings are present (or missing), leaving your computer potentially vulnerable to unexpected Windows 10 upgrade behavior. Even if only one suspicious setting is detected, clicking **Disable Operating System Upgrades in Windows Update** will make sure that ALL of those options are properly set to inhibit the upgrade behavior.

HOW PERMANENT IS "PERMANENT?"

At the time I'm writing this, the "Disable" features of GWX Control Panel really do what they're intended to do; they prevent unwanted OS upgrades and notifications. This works after system restarts and *most* Windows Updates with no further intervention on your part. GWX Control Panel doesn't break or uninstall any Windows features; it just gives you control over when things happen.

But Windows is a moving target. If Microsoft pushes another update that changes the Get Windows 10 or Windows Update behavior, or locks its upgrade settings down even further than they are already, the icon and the notifications and other annoyances might come back. If that ever happens, I will do my best to combat it and publish updates at my downloads page.

UPDATE (October 14, 2014): We have seen at least one case where a Windows Update patch can re-enable some settings that GWX Control Panel disables. (Specifically, it appears to be a recent overhaul to the [Windows 7](#) and [Windows 8](#) versions of Windows Update, which also resets all Windows Update settings, including those related to Windows 10 upgrades.) Be



vigilant and run GWX Control Panel after new updates are installed to make sure the OS hasn't re-enabled unwanted features. At some point I might add a feature to monitor for these settings changes in the background, but for now just know that if you have automatic updates enabled, you might need to keep an eye on things.

WHAT CHANGED IN THE LATEST RELEASE?

Here are the differences between all released versions of GWX Control Panel/GWX Stopper:

VERSION 1.5

Date: November 1, 2015

MD5 checksum: 5A3AD8242727E09AAEE45647474C1059

SHA-1 checksum: 8041E202B94FE70D5A32F710DC1A2357EC6134B2

Changes:

- Now detects the hidden \$Windows.~WS folder associated with the Windows 10 Media Creation Tool, in addition to the more common \$Windows.~BT folder that was already detected in previous versions.
- New **Delete Windows 10 Download Folders** feature now deletes both detected hidden download folders, preventing users from having to run scripts or manually override file security and ownership settings.
- Program now only requests administrator privileges when they're actually required, and only once per session, instead of always asking for permissions at program startup.
Note: This is a hard feature to test because of the thousands of user security/permissions possibilities out in the wild; please let me know if you experience unexpected behavior when attempting to perform operations.
- New **/norestart** command line switch to assist support staff who operate GWX Control Panel via remote assistance tools. (More elsewhere in this post.)
- Clear Windows Update Cache feature now displays a list of temporary effects that clearing the cache will have on Windows Update.
- Decoupled download folder size checking from rest of the informational stats to speed up the first screen refresh with current status.
- Removed the **Close 'Get Windows 10' App** button because it confused some users and was somewhat redundant, since the **Disable/Enable 'Get Windows 10' App** feature implicitly exits or launches the GWX app as needed.

VERSION 1.4

Date: October 18, 2015

MD5 checksum: 959F1627A304DAE42305AA4D4D23B770

SHA-1 checksum: E58E0B2AD672793BCBD35D74E35EA4A2E371EA18

Changes: Greatly expanded checks and fixes for Windows 10 upgrade hijacking the Windows Update control panel. Added new Clear Windows Update Cache feature for fixing extra stubborn Windows Update issues.

VERSION 1.3

Date: September 12, 2015

MD5 checksum: 68E547DB5559E823CE4CF7A03650FF47

SHA-1 checksum: 782AEA51E6CD6DF1350FB69D389DB308D24DF681

Changes: Additional detection to determine if Windows is configured to allow OS upgrades via Windows Update. Now locates and reports the total size of the hidden Windows 10 download



folder (usually **C:\\$Windows.~BT**) and gives you the ability to open the folder in Windows Explorer.

Note: I've noticed that lots of people are still downloading the original "GWX Stopper" file (must be from direct links instead of people finding my downloads page), so I have replaced the version 1.0 GWX_stopper.exe file on the server with a renamed copy of version 1.3 of GWX Control Panel. It is the same program now, with the same checksums, just with a different filename.

VERSION 1.2

Date: September 10, 2015

MD5 checksum: DC0F180C129E796A6E4D80861E0A5F9E

SHA-1 checksum: C93DF1C606EEAC929E48CA17B61DF117E65BB66F

Changes: Can now restore normal Windows Update behavior if it has entered 'Upgrade to Windows 10' mode.

VERSION 1.1

Date: September 7, 2015

MD5 checksum: D2BC4F41E644CB20A99661CE06709EE1

SHA-1 checksum: BCDB295F36AC2FA72575364F072D147BE6EFEBBE

Changes: Renamed to GWX Control Panel (GWX_control_panel.exe), now has the ability to launch/display GWX icon if app is enabled but not currently running.

VERSION 1.0

Date: August 30, 2015

MD5 checksum: EA1C2A2D8B8C659C852AC08582DE19CC

SHA-1 checksum: 55EFE9A57A9B7323B937BE5C12DC258C908B2DB8

Changes: First released version with original filename, GWX_stopper.exe.

WHY DOES WINDOWS ASK ME IF I WANT TO ALLOW GWX CONTROL PANEL TO MAKE CHANGES TO MY COMPUTER?

When you launch GWX Control Panel, you might see a dialog box that says, "Do you want to allow the following program to make changes to this computer?" This is a function of the User Account Control feature of Windows. GWX Control Panel requires so-called "Administrator privileges" in order to configure and control the Get Windows 10 app, so if you see this dialog box, you must click **Yes** in order to continue loading the program.

If Windows doesn't ask this question, it probably means the User Account Control feature is disabled.

WHAT ARE GWX CONTROL PANEL'S SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS?

Here are the specifics:

- **OS:** Windows 7 or Windows 8.1 (See note below)
- **Platform:** GWX Control Panel is a 32-bit application that runs on both 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) flavors of Windows.



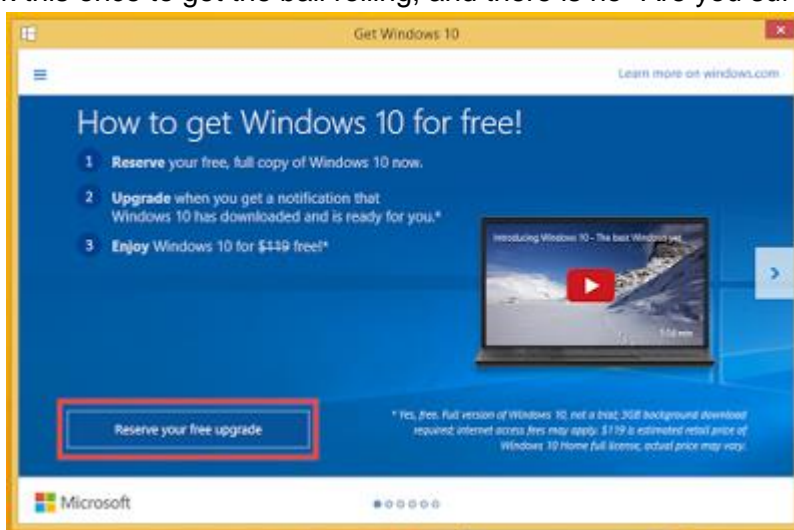
- **Connectivity:** The "**Display the User Guide**" button launches your default Internet browser to open this user guide, so you obviously need an internet connection for that. No other features of the program require a network, though.

Note about OS support: While it will technically run on any Windows operating system from Vista (and perhaps even XP) onward, it only serves a purpose on Windows 7 and Windows 8. According to [Microsoft's Knowledge Base article](#) about the patch that installs the Get Windows 10 application, it sounds like the app only installs on Windows 7 systems with Service Pack 1 installed, and Windows 8.1 systems with a different set of patches installed- and it won't install on the Enterprise versions of either OS.

WILL GWX CONTROL PANEL PREVENT MICROSOFT FROM UPGRADING MY COMPUTER TO WINDOWS 10?

Yes, it appears to- if you use it early enough! (See the next couple of questions for more info.)

First off, according to a Microsoft employee I know and trust, **Microsoft will not intentionally upgrade your Windows 7 or Windows 8 computer to Windows 10 without your consent.** (The purpose of the Get Windows 10 app is to annoy you into giving your consent!) You give your consent by clicking the **Reserve your free upgrade** button in the Get Windows 10 app, which you will only see if you click the notification icon or one of its notification pop-ups. You only have to click this once to get the ball rolling, and there is no "Are you sure?" confirmation.



By clicking this button, you give your consent to install Windows 10.

Even though it's possible to cancel your Windows 10 upgrade reservation in the Get Windows 10 app, doing so appears to put your computer in a state where it can actually download Windows 10 as a Windows Update. (I tested reserving and canceling on one of my Windows 7 computers, and afterward my Windows Update control panel always defaulted to a "**Upgrade to Windows 10**" screen and I had to click **Show all available updates** and then **deselect Upgrade to Windows 10 Pro** in order to install regular Windows updates.) So if you really don't want Windows 10 yet, it's best not to click that "Reserve" button to begin with!

Anyway, I've done several weeks of testing on eight computers running Windows 7 and Windows 8, and the Windows 10 installer only fully downloaded on two of my computers- and both were computers where I had reserved a Windows 10 upgrade. Windows 10 only actually



installed on the one computer where I didn't disable any OS features with GWX Control Panel. The computers where I reserved Windows 10 but then disabled the Get Windows 10 app have still never bothered me about Windows 10, and the rest of my computers, where I haven't reserved the upgrade, are more or less behaving as if they had never gotten the 'Get Windows 10' app to begin with, and the Windows Update control panel currently behaves normally on all of them (so no accidental Windows 10 upgrades via Windows Update).

As an update, in early October Microsoft issued a patch to the Windows Update system which reset some settings GWX Control Panel looks for, related to OS upgrades. Running the latest version of GWX Control Panel on my test systems returned them all to "disabled" status. To date I still haven't seen the 'Get Windows 10' icon re-appear on any of my computers where I disabled it with GWX Control Panel, only the "OS Upgrades" settings.

WILL GWX CONTROL PANEL PREVENT MICROSOFT FROM PUSHING THE WINDOWS 10 INSTALLER ONTO MY PC?

Yes, it appears to- again, if you use it early enough. (See next question for details.)

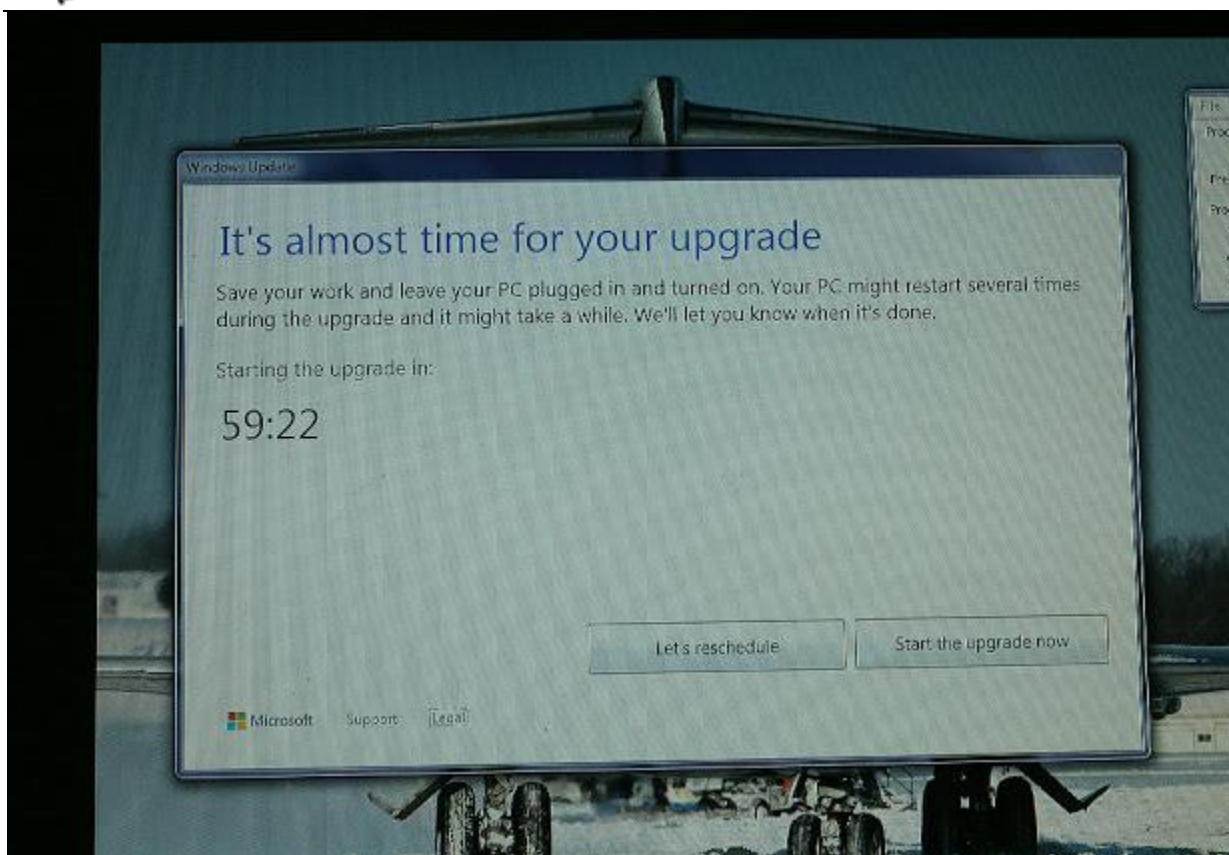
Beginning with version 1.3, the **Disable Operating System Upgrades in Windows Update** feature of GWX Control Panel attempts to block the secret download of the Windows 10 installer onto your PC. If the folder already exists, GWX Control Panel won't delete it- but if you apply the "disable operating system upgrades" feature and restart your computer, Windows shouldn't download any more of the installer until you re-enable upgrades and restart again.

There are two reasons I have to say that GWX Control Panel *appears to* work here: First, Microsoft has their own formulas for determining who gets the download files and when, so it's not something that's easy to test. I basically just have to leave my test computers running and wait. Second, in light of [recent rumors that Microsoft is pushing the secret download](#) to PCs, whether users have requested an upgrade or not, I don't know whether Microsoft is doing something new to force the downloads that GWX Control Panel doesn't know about yet.

All I can say is that on the eight or so computers where I have run GWX Control Panel, the only one that has downloaded the installer was one where I had explicitly requested the upgrade. (And this was before I had implemented the "disable operating system upgrades" feature.) I am still watching to see if things change.

WINDOWS IS ONLY GIVING ME THE OPTIONS OF RESCHEDULING OR IMMEDIATELY STARTING THE WINDOWS 10 UPGRADE: WILL GWX CONTROL PANEL HELP ME?

I hope so! After weeks of research and experimentation, version 1.4 includes some logic specifically intended to address the following behavior: If you are seeing either of the following screens, it means that Microsoft has pushed your PC into a state that the first few versions of GWX Control Panel were not designed to reverse:



This dialog says "It's almost time for your upgrade" and only gives you the options of "Let's Reschedule" or "Start the upgrade now." (Thanks to Bill M. for the screenshot.)



This Windows Update screen says "Your upgrade to Windows 10 is ready" and only gives you the option to "Restart now." (Thanks to David R. for the screenshot.) This is different from the problem where Windows Update defaults to saying "Upgrade to Windows 10" but you can click a link to view your current OS updates.

If you are seeing either of the above two screens, exactly as they appear here, current versions of GWX Control Panel should finally be able to help you, but I am still looking for confirmation from users experiencing this specific problem. It has been an especially tough



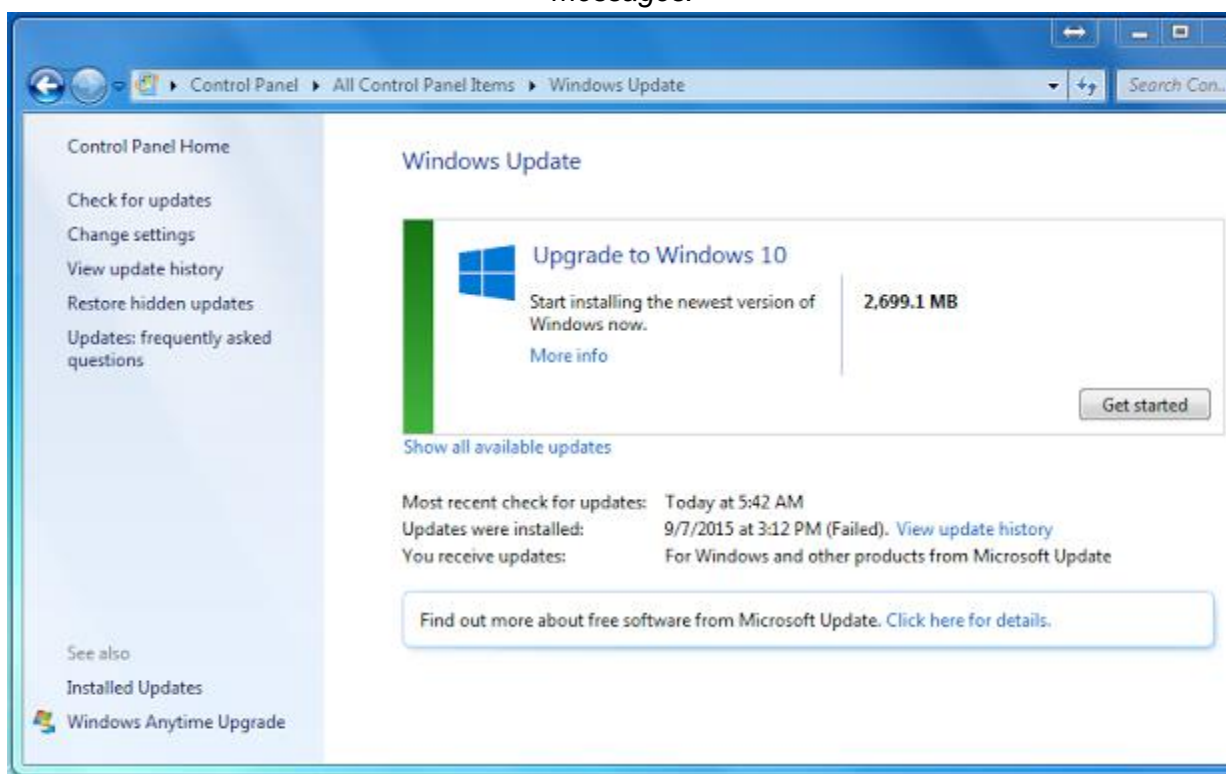
problem to work on since I've never been able to reproduce it on my own systems, and don't have access to any computers that were experiencing the issue.

OTHER PROBLEMS THAT GWX CONTROL PANEL DOES FIX:

To be perfectly clear, if you're seeing either of these following screens, these are things GWX Control Panel also can and does fix.



All versions of GWX Control Panel eliminate the Get Windows 10 App icon and its pop-up messages.





Beginning with version 1.2, GWX Control Panel can fix the problem where Windows Update says "Upgrade to Windows 10" and makes you click an extra "Show all available updates" link in order to see your current updates.

Additionally, GWX Control Panel will keep Microsoft from downloading the hidden 6GB Windows 10 install folder onto your Windows 7 or Windows 8 PC- again, if you use it early enough.

DOES GWX CONTROL PANEL RUN IN THE BACKGROUND AND MONITOR CHANGES MICROSOFT MAKES TO MY UPDATE SETTINGS?

At this time, no. GWX Control Panel only runs when you launch it, and while it actively monitors your Windows upgrade settings while it's running, it doesn't/can't watch your settings after you quit the program. (I am considering that functionality as an optional feature, but not promising anything yet.)

I have noticed that Microsoft occasionally re-pushes some of the Windows 10-related updates, even if you already installed them before. (For example, on October 5, my Windows Update told me I had an "important update" waiting that turned out to be the original "Get Windows 10 app" update, KB3035583, even though my Windows Update logs clearly show that update was already installed on my PC on August 21.)

It is possible that when Microsoft does this, they might overwrite some of the GWX Control Panel settings, meaning you might want to run GWX Control Panel after performing Windows Update to double-check that Microsoft didn't re-enable features you had previously disabled. I recommend restarting Windows before re-running GWX Control Panel, because some of these Windows 10-related updates don't "kick in" until after you restart Windows, and GWX Control Panel might not recognize they're in place until that time.

~~For what it's worth, I have not seen evidence that Microsoft IS reversing the GWX Control Panel settings, even after re-installing things like KB3035583. But better safe than sorry.~~

UPDATE (Oct. 14, 2015): On some of my Windows 7 systems, I noticed that a recent Windows Update ([probably this one](#)) reset the "Windows Update OS upgrades enabled" setting, which can potentially open you up to an accidental Windows 10 upgrade. I actually don't think this was a malicious change on Microsoft's part (the update in question was actually for Windows Update itself, and I think it just cleared out ALL update-related settings, not just those related to Windows 10), but it is our first evidence that Microsoft *can* change some of these settings via updates, so you will need to be vigilant and run GWX Control Panel after they're installed. (Or disable automatic updates, but I'm still not comfortable doing that personally.)

CAN GWX CONTROL PANEL DELETE THE HIDDEN WINDOWS 10 DOWNLOAD FOLDER?

Yes (beginning with version 1.5).



An original design goal of GWX Control Panel was to only make changes to your system that could easily be reversed, so I tried to avoid any features that involved permanently removing files. But the fact is that manually removing the \$Windows.~BT and \$Windows.~WS files is a hassle. There are scripts and tutorials online to help you do it, but I received a lot of requests to add this feature to the program, and it made sense. I also saw it as a personal challenge, since the work required to delete some of these hidden files programmatically is, in my opinion, some of the hardest programming you can do in Windows.

There are probably some performance and UI optimizations I can do while the process is underway, but for now it works and at least gives you a ballpark indication of where in the process you are.

ARE THERE ANY COMMAND LINE SWITCHES FOR RUNNING THE PROGRAM IN SPECIAL MODES?

Yes. This section will grow as new program modes are added. As with any Windows program, they work from a command line or as additional parameters in the **Target** field of shortcut properties.

- **/norestart** - This switch prevents any possibility of GWX Control Panel performing a system restart. This can help support technicians who are running GWX Control Panel via some sort of remote assistance tool, where slow connections can sometimes result in accidental clicks being sent to dialog boxes such as the prompts asking whether users would like to restart Windows. When this switch is used, instead of giving users the option to kick off a system restart from within the program, GWX Control Panel instructs users to exit the program and restart Windows manually.

I LOVE GWX CONTROL PANEL! HOW CAN I SHOW MY THANKS?

If you are so moved, you can express your thanks via a PayPal donation of any amount.



You can use the "Add special instructions to recipient" field on the PayPal form to send me a personal note. I read and love them all! Also, rest assured that if you send a donation you might get a personal 'thank you' back from me, but I will **not** save your email address or add you to any kind of mailing list or subscription. I'm here to alleviate annoyances, not create new ones. :)

Of course I'm always happy to hear from you in the comments or on the [Ultimate Outsider Facebook page](#).



WHO ARE YOU?

Professionally, I've worked as a software engineer for 20 years, with the most recent 16 years of that in the Tech industry. I have developed software for every version of Windows from 3.1 through Windows 10, and have recently begun working in embedded Linux.

In my spare time I write and record music, although I've devoted the past 3 or 4 years almost exclusively to developing my recording and mixing skills so that my original compositions sound more professional. As I acquire knowledge and develop my own skills, I also maintain the Ultimate Outsider blog, which is primarily focused on music production.

And of course I also sometimes write and publish free software.

WHY DID YOU WRITE THIS PROGRAM?

I use [my main desktop PC](#) for music production, and at the moment some applications and hardware that are critical to my work either have [known compatibility issues](#) with, or [flat-out don't work](#) in Windows 10- so I'm sticking with Windows 7 until I'm reasonably confident my stuff will still function correctly after I upgrade. While I don't have any general negative opinions on Microsoft or Windows 10, I found the Get Windows 10 app's relentless upgrade reminders absolutely infuriating because there was no obvious way to stop them. Of course I found some solutions online (of wildly varying complexity and efficacy), but I had a bigger problem...

You see, I also had a lot of friends and family with Windows 7 and Windows 8 on their computers who were also continually pestered by the Get Windows 10 app- and I wanted to give them a solution that was literally so easy my mom could do it. None of the tutorials I'd seen about how to deal with the app are what I'd consider novice-friendly, whereas GWX Control Panel is a one-click solution.

DO YOU SHARE YOUR SOURCE CODE?

Like the majority of Windows developers, I do not publish my source code. While I wrote GWX Control Panel (and every other free tool I've published) on my own time, with my own OS and developer tool licenses (thank you, Microsoft, for the [Visual Studio Community Edition!](#)) and while I distribute the programs for free, the knowledge and experience that goes into my programs is my most valuable personal asset in terms of my career and livelihood. It's the reason people pay me to code for them, and I protect it.

Although the core logic behind GWX Control Panel's ability to control and configure the Get Windows 10 app is what I consider somewhat trivial, the GWX Control Panel application consumes my personal class library, which is a 100% original code base of elegant, efficient utility functions covering many aspects of working in Windows. I use it for everything I write in my free time, and to share GWX Control Panel's code would be to share my private library code- and I just won't do that.

WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOUR SOFTWARE?

That's a fair question, and here's what I can offer in response:



- **I have a track record.** I've been publishing free tools for developers, system admins, (and more recently, music producers) since the late 90s. Some of the [tools at my old site](#) have been downloaded tens of thousands of times. (I'm as surprised as anyone about that, by the way. I don't think I've even touched that site for over a decade, but every time I consider pulling the plug on it I check the stats only to find that thousands of people are still going there every month.) The only complaints I've ever gotten about those tools were from people using my 16-year-old programs on brand new computers with much more RAM and storage space than a couple of my tools were originally written to account for. Also, my more recent programs, [Nexus Preset Organizer](#) and [UltimatePluginTool](#) have been downloaded thousands of times each, and I've only ever gotten positive feedback... except for a few Mac users unhappy about the fact that I haven't ported anything to OS X.
- **My recent programs are digitally signed.** A digital signature serves two important purposes: First, it proves that the copy of the file you received is an authentic, unmodified binary that the author intended. If anyone attempts to tamper with the binary, doing so violates the digital signature. (More on this in the next question.) Second, the signature ties a real-world developer (as well as the developer's web domain) to the binary file. I had to go through an excruciating three-week process to get approval for my digital signature, because of the lengths that the signing authorities go to in order to ensure that certificates are awarded to legitimate individuals and businesses. Developers who write sketchy software don't sign their binaries, because doing so leaves a paper trail.
- **My web site has been white-listed by the Microsoft SmartScreen filter.** Windows 8 and Windows 10 have a [SmartScreen feature](#) that checks downloads against a list of known malware sites, and when you attempt to launch a downloaded program from either a known malicious site or simply a site whose provenance is not yet known, they display a warning before letting you proceed with the file. (This is different from the User Account Control warnings I describe elsewhere.) When I first started distributing software from the ultimateoutsider.com domain, my downloads triggered SmartScreen warnings simply because Microsoft had no record of my reputation one way or the other, but after a couple of weeks of consistent safe downloads from my site, I built up a positive reputation in the SmartScreen system and my downloads no longer trigger SmartScreen notifications.

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY COPY OF GWX CONTROL PANEL IS AUTHENTIC?

Within a day of publishing GWX Control Panel it was showing up on third-party sites for download. (It's even showing up on torrent sites, for some reason?) While I can only vouch for software that you download from [my own downloads page](#), here are some ways you can prove the file you downloaded is authentic.

- **GWX Control Panel is a standalone executable.** I did not write an installer for GWX Control Panel. The entire package is just a single stand-alone executable file: **GWX_control_panel.exe**. If you downloaded it from a third-party site and there was an installer or downloader or bundled software of any kind, that stuff didn't come from me.
- **GWX Control Panel is digitally signed.** If someone tampers with my file, its digital signature will be invalidated. Here's how you can check that the signature is still intact: Locate the copy of **GWX_control_panel.exe** you downloaded in Windows Explorer. Right-click the file and then click **Properties**. You should see a tab called **Digital Signatures**. If you don't see the **Digital Signatures** tab, then the file is not authentic! If you *do* see the **Digital Signatures** tab, there should be only a single "**sha1**" signature listed, with my real name listed as the signer. If you select the signature and click



Details, you'll see that the signature is tied to both my real name and the **ultimateoutsider.com** domain. If you see anything other than an ultimateoutsider.com email address, then this file did not come from me!

- **Your copy should match my published MD5 and SHA-1 checksums.** I have updated [the downloads page](#) with the MD5 and SHA-1 checksum values for GWX Control Panel. Here's how to confirm that your copy matches the one that I published: Get the [MD5 & SHA Checksum Utility](#) and launch it. When the program opens, click **Browse** to locate your downloaded copy of **GWX_control_panel.exe**. The MD5 and SHA-1 values that appear should match the values I published for GWX Control Panel on [my downloads page](#). The published values reflect the version that's currently available for download. As I write this, I've only ever published the 1.0.0.0 release, but I will update the checksum values if I ever post updates. You can see a historical list of checksum values in the answer to *"What changed in the latest release?"* later in this post.
- **The only official distribution point for GWX Control Panel is ultimateoutsider.com.** I am the only person who controls what gets published here, and while I don't have any evidence that third parties have tampered with my files, better safe than sorry. I stand behind everything I write, but only if you [get it from here](#).

DOES GWX CONTROL PANEL DO ANYTHING THAT HASN'T BEEN DESCRIBED IN VARIOUS TUTORIALS OR MESSAGE BOARD THREADS?

There are lots of blog posts and message board threads discussing how to get rid of the Get Windows 10 app, but aside from frequently being too advanced for truly novice users, I've also observed the following:

- Some methods are only temporary fixes. They make the app go away until you restart Windows, or maybe until you do another Windows Update, but they don't truly stop the Get Windows 10 app from bothering you- they just postpone it.
- Some methods are what I'd consider unsafe (especially the ones that involve you disabling Windows Update).
- Some methods have potential to result in unexpected or undesired behavior if you're not completely sure what you're doing or if you apply a change to the wrong files or folders.
- Some were more permanent/final solutions than I liked. I didn't want to delete or permanently break the application; I wanted to be able to re-enable the Get Windows 10 app when I was ready to use it.
- And some just went way beyond what was truly necessary to keep the Get Windows 10 app from bothering you.

GWX Control Panel doesn't do anything particularly special (well, the early versions didn't anyway). It's just simple and safe, and it works.

WHY DID YOU RENAME THE PROGRAM?

A few days after publishing this program under its original name, GWX Stopper, I discovered an online video about another, somewhat mysterious program called "GWXStopper." While this other program appeared to have the same ostensible purpose as mine- to dismiss the 'Get Windows 10' icon- the video left me with a lot of questions. For one thing, I cannot find any information about this other GWXStopper on the website of the apparent developer, although



the direct download link in the video's description goes to their site. I haven't used or downloaded the other program, so I won't speculate on how it works or what it does. I can only say that based on what I saw in that video, even if I had known about that other program's existence beforehand I still would have written mine. I'd have just named it something else.

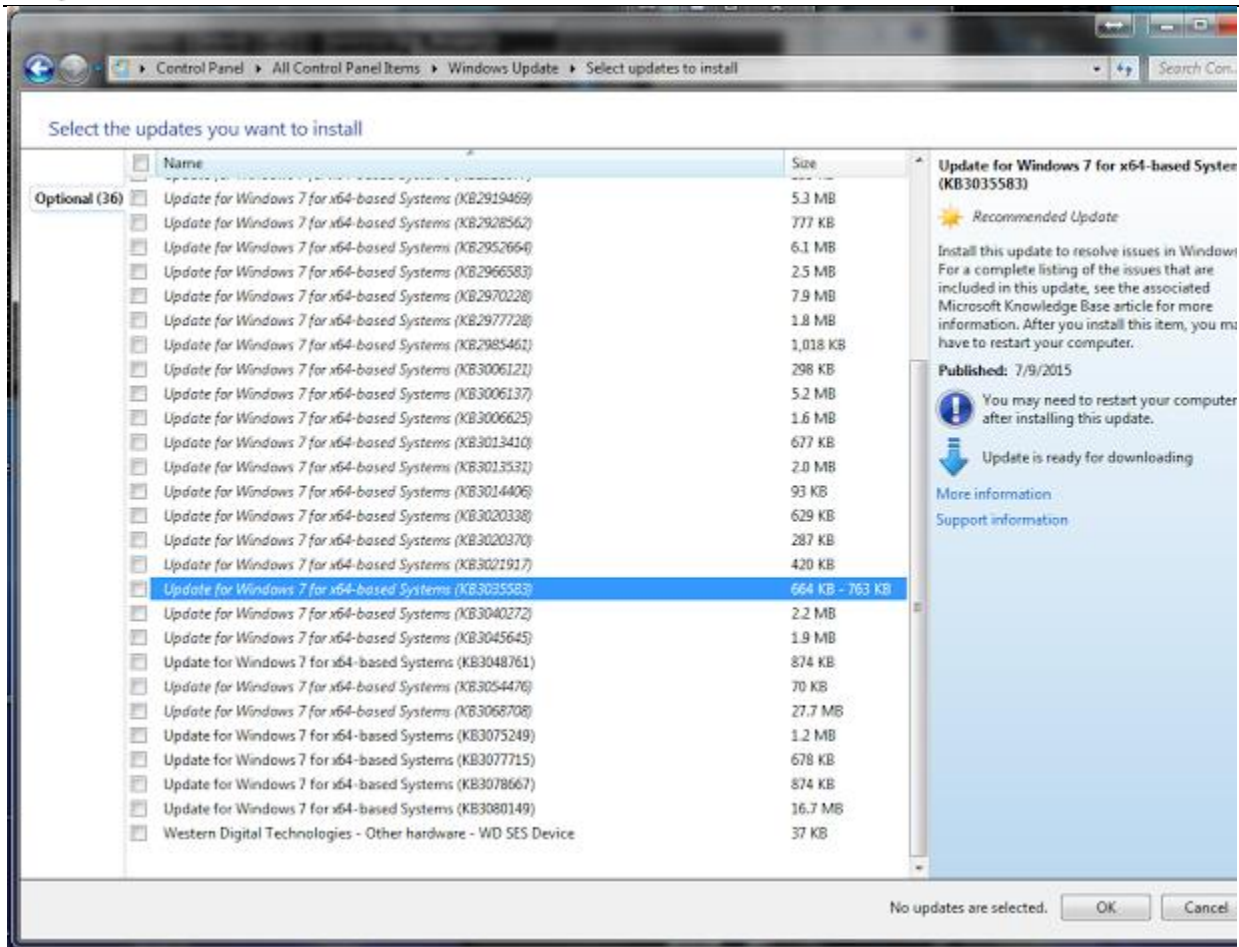
So anyway, I renamed my program to eliminate any confusion between the two utilities. The funny thing is, when I was writing my tool, it was originally called "GWX Closer." I decided I didn't like that name, though, because it implied that the program only closed a running instance of the Get Windows 10 app, rather than permanently disabling it. I'm embarrassed for not having web-searched the name before I published the tool. "GWX Control Panel" appears to be safe for now, though!

ANYTHING ELSE?

Why yes, thank you for asking, imaginary reader! As I mentioned earlier, I am neither anti-Microsoft nor anti-Windows 10, but I am absolutely opposed to the design and methodology of the Get Windows 10 App.

The Get Windows 10 app has many traits that are usually associated with malware:

- **It's non-essential software that's deceptively bundled with other, legitimate software via the Windows Update process.** Even if you're the type to pick and choose Windows updates individually, the summary information about the update that installs the app makes the patch sound like a bug fix rather than a nagware installer: "Install this update to resolve issues in Windows." In computer security circles, software that claims to be something it's not [is called a Trojan](#). You will only know what the patch actually installs if you click the **More information** link, which brings you to the [KB3035583 Knowledge Base article](#).



The misleading description of the update that installs the Get Windows 10 nagware.

- **It repeatedly and frequently interrupts your day-to-day work.** Once the Get Windows 10 App is installed on your computer, it will pop up unexpected reminders to upgrade, and it won't stop bugging you until you relent and move on to Windows 10. This behavior basically turns your legitimately licensed copy of Windows 7 or Windows 8 into [nagware](#).
- **It cannot be disabled or configured via normal means.** Just about any other legitimate system tray ("notification area") application these days offers a right-click menu with the ability to disable notifications or prevent the tool from starting with Windows. Not doing so is in direct opposition to [Microsoft's own guidelines](#) on how to develop applications that display icons in the notification area.



Keeping users in control

Keeping users in control extends beyond using the notification area correctly. Depending on the nature of your icon you may want to let users do the following:

- **Remove the icon.** Your icon may provide relevant, useful status, but even so, users may not want to see it. Windows allows users to hide icons, but this feature isn't easily discoverable. To keep users in control, provide a **Display icon in notification area** option on the icon's context menu. Note that removing an icon doesn't have to affect the underlying program, feature, or process.
- **Select types of notifications to display.** Your notification must be useful and relevant, but there may be notifications that users don't want to see. This is especially true for FYI notifications. Let users choose to enable the less important ones.
- **Suspend optional features.** Icons are used to display status for features without desktop presence. Such features tend to be long-running, optional background tasks, such as printing, indexing, scanning, or synchronizing. Users may want to suspend such features to increase system performance, reduce power consumption, or because they are offline.
- **Quit the program.** Provide the more suitable of these options:
 - **Temporarily quit program.** The program is stopped and restarted when Windows is restarted. This approach is suitable for important system utilities such as security programs.
 - **Permanently quit program.** The program is stopped and not restarted when Windows is restarted (unless the user chooses to restart later). Either the user no longer wants to run the program, or wants to run the program on demand—perhaps to improve system performance.

Although it's a good idea to provide most of these settings on the icon's context menu, the program's default experience should be suitable for most users. Don't turn everything on by default and expect users to turn features off. Rather, turn the important features on by default, and let users enable additional features as desired.

These are only SOME of Microsoft's design guidelines the Get Windows 10 app ignores.

- **It is difficult for novice users to locate and remove.** Just like most modern viruses and malware, the Get Windows 10 app installs in a location where most users would not know to look, and uses non-descriptive file and folder names to obscure its identity. The app lives in a folder named GWX ("Get Windows 10"- get it?) under the System32 folder of your Windows directory. The files are locked down with special permissions, meaning they are very difficult to rename or remove- although it is possible with the right system permissions and procedures. Of course most users look in the **Programs and Features** control panel when they want to remove software- and although you can use the control panel to remove the KB3035583 update, you obviously have to know that it's where the GWX app came from. But even if you manage to do that, it will also re-install automatically in future Windows updates.
- **It can break user expectations.** After some experimentation with the Get Windows 10 experience, I've discovered that if you reserve your Windows 10 upgrade via the 'Get Windows 10' app, but then decide you don't wish to upgrade and cancel your reservation, Windows can still automatically upgrade your computer to Windows 10 by selecting and installing an optional 'Upgrade to Windows 10' update that becomes available some time after you reserve your copy. This probably explains various reports I've heard of people receiving unexpected operating system upgrades. When a user says "no" to something you can't break your contract with the user and proceed anyway.

I have legitimate reasons for wanting to stick with Windows 7 for the moment since several tools I rely on simply aren't Windows 10-compatible yet, but Microsoft is literally trying to annoy me into upgrading to a new operating system that I'm just not ready for. The Get Windows 10 app is *evil software*, and I don't like the precedent that it sets, particularly given how successful it's apparently been at accomplishing Microsoft's objectives. GWX Control Panel is my humble



DIETMAR WALKER - PC-BLITZHELPER-NOTDIENST
Nationalgasse 14 • 72124 Pliezhausen • ☎ Tel. 07127 / 89194 - Fax 89118
Internet: <http://www.pc-blitzhelfer.de> – Mobil 0172-882 79 55

protest against the app, and hopefully a way to help other Windows 7 and Windows 8 users regain control over their computing experience.

Quelle: <http://blog.ultimateoutsider.com/2015/08/using-gwx-stopper-to-permanently-remove.html>