

Understanding Windows Server 2025

So, you have decided to start down the track of Windows Server 2025. The first question we must ask ourselves is, “What’s the first step?” Well, the first step is to learn about what’s new about the Windows Server 2025 features and benefits that are available and how these features can help improve your organization’s network.

So that’s where I am going to start. I will talk about the different Windows Server 2025 versions and what version may be best for you. So, let’s dive right into the server by talking about some of the features and advantages of Windows Server 2025.

Features and Advantages of Windows Server 2025

Before deciding to install and configure Windows Server 2025, it’s first important to learn about some of the features and the advantages it offers. Windows Server 2025 is built off of the solid foundation of Windows Server, but Microsoft has stated that Windows Server 2025 is “a cloud-ready operating system.” This means that many of the features of Windows Server 2025 are built and evolve around cloud-based software and networking.

I will talk about all of these features in greater detail throughout this book. What follows are merely brief descriptions of some of the features of Windows Server 2025.

Built-In Security Microsoft has always tried to make sure that its operating systems are as secure as possible, but with Windows Server 2025, Microsoft has included Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (ATP). This feature helps stop attackers on your system and allows a company to meet any compliance requirements.

Active Directory Certificate Services *Active Directory Certificate Services (AD CS)* provides a customizable set of services that allow you to issue and manage *public key infrastructure (PKI) certificates*. These certificates can be used in software security systems that employ public key technologies.

Active Directory Domain Services *Active Directory Domain Services (AD DS)* includes new features that make deploying domain controllers simpler and that let you implement them faster. AD DS also makes the domain controllers more flexible, both to audit and to authorize for access to files. Moreover, AD DS has been designed to make performing administrative tasks easier through consistent graphical and scripted management experiences.

Active Directory Federation Services *Active Directory Federation Services (AD FS)* provides Internet-based clients with a secure identity access solution that works on both Windows and non-Windows operating systems. AD FS gives users the ability to do a *single sign-on (SSO)* and access applications on other networks without needing a secondary password. Federation Services is one of the ways that you can connect your on-site domain with the cloud.

Active Directory Lightweight Directory Services *Active Directory Lightweight Directory Services (AD LDS)* is a *Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP)* directory service that provides flexible support for directory-enabled applications, without the dependencies and domain-related restrictions of AD DS.

Active Directory Rights Management Services *Active Directory Rights Management Services (AD RMS)* provides management and development tools that let you work with industry security technologies, including encryption, certificates, and authentication. Using these technologies allows organizations to create reliable information protection solutions.

Application Server *Application Server* provides an integrated environment for deploying and running custom, server-based business applications.

BitLocker *BitLocker* is a tool that allows you to encrypt the hard drives of your computer. By encrypting the hard drives, you can provide enhanced protection against data theft or unauthorized exposure of your computers or removable drives that are lost or stolen.

BranchCache *BranchCache* allows data from files and web servers on a wide area network (WAN) to be cached on computers at a local branch office.

By using BranchCache, you can improve application response times while also reducing WAN traffic. Cached data can be either distributed across peer client computers (distributed cache mode) or centrally hosted on a server (hosted cache mode). BranchCache is included with Windows Server 2025 and Windows 11.

Containers Windows Server 2025 has continued focusing on an isolated operating system environment called Docker. Docker allows applications to run in isolated environments called *containers*. Containers are a separate location where applications can operate without affecting other applications or other operating system resources. To understand Docker and containers, think of virtualization.

Virtual machines are operating systems that run in their own space on top of another operating system. Well, Docker and containers allow an application to run in its own space, and because of this, it doesn't affect other application. There are two different types of containers to focus on:

Windows Server Containers Windows Server 2025 allows for an isolated application to run by using a technology called *process and namespace isolation*. Windows Server 2025 containers allow applications to share the system's kernel with their container and all other containers running on the same host.

Hyper-V Containers Windows Server 2025 Hyper-V containers add another virtual layer by isolating applications in their own optimized virtual machine. Hyper-V containers work differently than Windows Server containers in that the Hyper-V containers do not share the system's kernel with other Hyper-V containers.

Credential Guard Credential Guard helps protect a system's credentials and this helps avoid pass-the-hash attacks. Credential Guard offers better protection against advanced persistent threats by protecting credentials on the system from being stolen by a compromised administrator or malware.

Credential Guard can also be enabled on Remote Desktop Services servers and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure so that the credentials for users connecting to their sessions are protected.

DHCP *Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP)* is an Internet standard that allows organizations to reduce the administrative overhead of configuring hosts on a TCP/IP-based network. Some of the features are DHCP failover, policy-based assignment, and the ability to use Windows PowerShell for DHCP Server.

DNS *Domain Name System (DNS)* services are used in TCP/IP networks. DNS will convert a computer name or fully qualified domain name (FQDN) to an IP address. DNS also has the ability to do a reverse lookup and convert

an IP address to a computer name. DNS allows you to locate computers and services through user-friendly names.

Failover Clustering *Failover Clustering* gives an organization the ability to provide high availability and scalability to networked servers. Failover clusters can include file share storage for server applications, such as Hyper-V and Microsoft SQL Server, and those that run on physical servers or virtual machines.

File Server Resource Manager *File Server Resource Manager* is a set of tools that allows administrators to manage and control the amount and type of data stored on the organization's servers. By using File Server Resource Manager, administrators have the ability to set up file management tasks, use quota management, get detailed reports, set up a file classification infrastructure, and configure file-screening management.

File and Storage Services *File and Storage Services* allows an administrator to set up and manage one or more file servers. These servers can provide a central location on your network where you can store files and then share those files with network users. If users require access to the same files and applications or if centralized backup and file management are important issues for your organization, administrators should set up network servers as a file server.

Group Policy *Group policies* are a set of rules and management configuration options that you can control through the Group Policy settings. These policy settings can be placed on users' computers throughout the organization.

Hyper-V *Hyper-V* is one of the most changed features in Windows Server 2025. Hyper-V allows an organization to consolidate servers by creating and managing a virtualized computing environment. It does this by using virtualization technology that is built into Windows Server 2025.

Hyper-V allows you to run multiple operating systems simultaneously on one physical computer. Each virtual operating system runs in its own virtual machine environment.

Windows Server 2025 Hyper-V now allows an administrator to protect their corporate virtual machines using the feature called Shielded Virtual Machine. Shielded Virtual Machines are encrypted using BitLocker, and the VMs can run only on approved Hyper-V host systems.

Hyper-V also now includes containers, which add a new, unique additional layer of isolation for containerized applications.

IPAM *IP Address Management (IPAM)* is one of the features first introduced with Windows Server 2016, but Microsoft then did an update so that IPAM would work on Windows Server 2012. IPAM allows an administrator to customize and monitor the IP address infrastructure on a corporate network.

Kerberos Authentication Windows Server 2025 uses the *Kerberos authentication* protocol and extensions for password-based and public key authentication. The Kerberos client is installed as a *security support provider (SSP)*, and it can be accessed through the *Security Support Provider Interface (SSPI)*.

Managed Service Accounts (MSAs) Stand-alone *managed service accounts*, originally created for Windows Server 2008 R2 and Windows 7, are configured domain accounts that allow automatic password management and *service principal names (SPNs)* management, including the ability to delegate management to other administrators.

Nested Virtualization Windows Server 2016 introduced a new Hyper-V feature called Nested Virtualization. Nested Virtualization allows administrators to create virtual machines within virtual machines. As an instructor, this was an awesome new feature. Now I can build a Windows Server 2025 Hyper-V Server with a training virtual machine. Then, when I get to the part when I need to teach Hyper-V, I can just do that right in the classroom virtual machine. There are numerous possibilities and we will talk more about them throughout this book.

Nano Server Windows Server 2016 introduced a new type of server installation called Nano Server. Nano Server requires an administrator to remotely administer the server operating system. It was primarily designed and optimized for private clouds and datacenters. Nano Server is similar to Server Core, but the Nano Server operating system uses significantly smaller hard drive space, has no local logon capability, and only supports 64-bit applications and tools.

Networking There are many networking technologies and features in Windows Server 2025, including BranchCache, Data Center Bridging (DCB), NIC Teaming, and many more.

Network Load Balancing The *Network Load Balancing (NLB)* feature dispenses traffic across multiple servers by using the TCP/IP networking protocol. By combining two or more computers that are running applications in Windows Server 2025 into a single virtual cluster, NLB provides reliability and performance for mission-critical servers.

Network Policy and Access Services Use the *Network Policy Server (NPS) and Access Services* server role to install and configure *Network Access Protection (NAP)*, secure wired and wireless access points, and RADIUS servers and proxies.

Print and Document Services *Print and Document Services* allows an administrator to centralize print server and network printer tasks. This role also allows you to receive scanned documents from network scanners and route the documents to a shared network resource, Windows SharePoint Services

site, or email addresses. Print and Document Services also provides fax servers with the ability to send and receive faxes while also giving the administrator the ability to manage fax resources such as jobs, settings, reports, and fax devices on the fax server.

PowerShell Direct Windows Server 2016 included a new simple way to manage Hyper-V virtual machines called PowerShell Direct. PowerShell Direct is a powerful set of parameters for the PSSession cmdlet called VMName. This will be discussed in greater detail in the Hyper-V chapters and it is included with Windows Server 2025.

Remote Desktop Services Before Windows Server 2008, we used to refer to this as Terminal Services. *Remote Desktop Services* allows users to connect to virtual desktops, RemoteApp programs, and session-based desktops. Using Remote Desktop Services allows users to access remote connections from within a corporate network or from the Internet.

Security Auditing *Security auditing* gives an organization the ability to help maintain the security of an enterprise. By using security audits, you can verify authorized or unauthorized access to machines, resources, applications, and services. One of the best advantages of security audits is to verify regulatory compliance.

Smart Cards Using *smart cards* (referred to as *two-factor authentication*) and their associated *personal identification numbers (PINs)* is a popular, reliable, and cost-effective way to provide authentication. When using smart cards, the user not only must have the physical card but also must know the PIN to be able to gain access to network resources. This is effective because even if the smart card is stolen, thieves can't access the network unless they know the PIN.

Software-Defined Networking Software-Defined Networking (SDN) allows an administrator to centrally configure and manage their physical and virtual network devices. These devices include items such as routers, switches, and gateways in your datacenter.

Telemetry The *Telemetry* service allows the Windows Feedback Forwarder to send feedback to Microsoft automatically by deploying a Group Policy setting to one or more organizational units. Windows Feedback Forwarder is available on all editions of Windows Server 2025, including Server Core.

TLS/SSL (Schannel SSP) *Schannel* is a security support provider (SSP) that uses the *Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)* and *Transport Layer Security (TLS)* Internet standard authentication protocols together. The Security Support Provider Interface is an API used by Windows systems to allow security-related functionality, including authentication.

Volume Activation Windows Server 2025 *Volume Activation* will help your organization benefit from using this service to deploy and manage volume licenses for a medium to large number of computers.

Web Server (IIS) The *Web Server (IIS)* role in Windows Server 2025 allows an administrator to set up a secure, easy-to-manage, modular, and extensible platform for reliably hosting websites, services, and applications.

Windows Deployment Services *Windows Deployment Services* allows an administrator to install Windows operating systems remotely. Administrators can use Windows Deployment Services to set up new computers by using a network-based installation.

Windows PowerShell Desired State Configuration Windows Server 2016 created a new PowerShell management platform called Windows PowerShell Desired State Configuration (DSC). DSC enables the deploying and managing of configuration data for software services, and it also helps manage the environment in which these services run.

DSC allows administrators to use Windows PowerShell language extensions along with new Windows PowerShell cmdlets and resources. DSC allows you to declaratively specify how a corporation wants their software environment to be configured and maintained.

DSC allows you to automate tasks like enabling or disabling server roles and features, manage registry settings, manage files and directories, manage groups and users, deploy software, and run PowerShell scripts, to just name a few.

Windows Server Backup Feature The *Windows Server Backup* feature gives an organization a way to back up and restore Windows servers. You can use Windows Server Backup to back up the entire server (all volumes), selected volumes, the system state, or specific files or folders.

Windows Server Update Services *Windows Server Update Services (WSUS)* allows administrators to deploy application and operating system updates. By deploying WSUS, administrators have the ability to manage updates that are released through Microsoft Update to computers in their network. This feature is integrated with the operating system as a server role on a Windows Server 2025 system.

Deciding Which Windows Server 2025 Version to Use

You may be wondering which version of Windows Server 2025 is best for your organization. After all, Microsoft offers the following four versions of Windows Server 2025:

Windows Server 2025 Datacenter This version is designed for organizations that are looking to migrate to a highly virtualized, private cloud environment. Windows Server 2025 Datacenter has full Windows Server functionality with unlimited virtual instances.

Windows Server 2025 Standard This version is designed for organizations with physical or minimally virtualized environments. Windows Server 2025 Standard has full Windows Server functionality with two virtual instances.

Windows Server 2025 Essentials This version is ideal for small businesses that have as many as 25 users and 50 devices. Windows Server 2025 Essentials has a simpler interface and preconfigured connectivity to cloud-based services but no virtualization rights.

Windows Server 2025 Azure Edition This version is optimized for integration with Microsoft Azure, enabling seamless hybrid cloud capabilities.

Table 1-1 shows you the locks and limitations of Windows Server 2025 Standard and Windows Server 2025 Datacenter. This chart was taken directly from Microsoft's website.

Table 1-1: Windows Server 2025 Locks and Limits

LOCKS AND LIMITS	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 STANDARD	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 DATACENTER
Maximum number of users	Based on CALs	Based on CALs
Maximum SMB connections	16,777,216	16,777,216
Maximum RRAS connections	Unlimited	Unlimited
Maximum IAS connections	2,147,483,647	2,147,483,647
Maximum RDS connections	65,535	65,535
Maximum number of 64-bit sockets	64	64
Maximum number of cores	Unlimited	Unlimited
Maximum RAM	24 TB	24 TB
Can be used as virtualization guest	Yes, two virtual machines, plus one Hyper-V host per license	Yes, unlimited virtual machines, plus one Hyper-V host per license
Server can join a domain	Yes	Yes
Edge network protection/ firewall	No	No
DirectAccess	Yes	Yes
DLNA codecs and web media streaming	Yes, if installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, if installed as Server with Desktop

Table 1-2 (continued)

WINDOWS SERVER ROLES AVAILABLE	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 STANDARD	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 DATACENTER
Network Policy and Access Services	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Print and Document Services	Yes	Yes
Remote Access	Yes	Yes
Remote Desktop Services	Yes	Yes
Volume Activation Services	Yes	Yes
Web Services (IIS)	Yes	Yes
Windows Deployment Services	Yes*	Yes*
Windows Server Essentials Experience	No	No
Windows Server Update Services	Yes	Yes

NOTE *WDS Transport Server is new to Server Core installations in Windows Server 2025 (also in the semi-annual channel starting with Windows Server, version 1803).

Table 1-3 shows you the features of Windows Server 2025 Standard and Windows Server 2025 Datacenter. This chart was taken directly from Microsoft's website.

Table 1-3: Windows Server 2025 Standard vs. Datacenter

WINDOWS SERVER FEATURES INSTALLABLE WITH SERVER MANAGER (OR POWERSHELL)	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 STANDARD	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 DATACENTER
.NET Framework 3.5	Yes	Yes
.NET Framework 4.7	Yes	Yes
Background Intelligent Transfer Service (BITS)	Yes	Yes
BitLocker Drive Encryption	Yes	Yes
BitLocker Network Unlock	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
BranchCache	Yes	Yes
Client for NFS	Yes	Yes

WINDOWS SERVER FEATURES INSTALLABLE WITH SERVER MANAGER (OR POWERSHELL)	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 STANDARD	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 DATACENTER
Containers	Yes (unlimited Windows containers; up to two Hyper-V containers)	Yes (unlimited Windows and Hyper-V containers)
Data Center Bridging	Yes	Yes
Direct Play	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Enhanced Storage	Yes	Yes
Failover Clustering	Yes	Yes
Group Policy Management	Yes	Yes
Host Guardian Hyper-V Support	No	Yes
I/O Quality of Service	Yes	Yes
IIS Hostable Web Core	Yes	Yes
Internet Printing Client	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
IPAM Server	Yes	Yes
iSNS Server Service	Yes	Yes
LPR Port Monitor	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Management OData IIS Extension	Yes	Yes
Media Foundation	Yes	Yes
Message Queueing	Yes	Yes
Multipath I/O	Yes	Yes
MultiPoint Connector	Yes	Yes
Network Load Balancing	Yes	Yes
Peer Name Resolution Protocol	Yes	Yes
Quality Windows Audio Video Experience	Yes	Yes

Continues

Table 1-3 (continued)

WINDOWS SERVER FEATURES INSTALLABLE WITH SERVER MANAGER (OR POWERSHELL)	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 STANDARD	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 DATACENTER
RAS Connection Manager Administration Kit	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Remote Assistance	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Remote Differential Compression	Yes	Yes
RSAT	Yes	Yes
RPC over HTTP Proxy	Yes	Yes
Setup and Boot Event Collection	Yes	Yes
Simple TCP/IP Services	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
SMB 1.0/CIFS File Sharing Support	Installed	Installed
SMB Bandwidth Limit	Yes	Yes
SMTP Server	Yes	Yes
SNMP Service	Yes	Yes
Software Load Balancer	Yes	Yes
Storage Replica	Yes	Yes
Telnet Client	Yes	Yes
TFTP Client	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
VM Shielding Tools for Fabric Management	Yes	Yes
WebDAV Redirector	Yes	Yes
Windows Biometric Framework	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Windows Defender Features	Installed	Installed

WINDOWS SERVER FEATURES INSTALLABLE WITH SERVER MANAGER (OR POWERSHELL)	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 STANDARD	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 DATACENTER
Windows Identity Foundation 3.5	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Windows Internal Database	Yes	Yes
Windows PowerShell	Installed	Installed
Windows Process Activation Service	Yes	Yes
Windows Search Service	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Windows Server Backup	Yes	Yes
Windows Server Migration Tools	Yes	Yes
Windows Standards-Based Storage Management	Yes	Yes
Windows TIFF IFilter	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
WinRM IIS Extension	Yes	Yes
WINS Server	Yes	Yes
Wireless LAN Service	Yes	Yes
WoW64 Support	Installed	Installed
XPS Viewer	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience	Yes, when installed as Server with Desktop Experience
Features available generally	Windows Server 2025 Standard	Windows Server 2025 Datacenter
Best Practices Analyzer	Yes	Yes
Direct Access	Yes	Yes
Dynamic Memory (in virtualization)	Yes	Yes
Hot Add/Replace RAM	Yes	Yes
Microsoft Management Console	Yes	Yes

Continues

Table 1-3 (continued)

WINDOWS SERVER FEATURES INSTALLABLE WITH SERVER MANAGER (OR POWERSHELL)	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 STANDARD	WINDOWS SERVER 2025 DATACENTER
Minimal Server Interface	Yes	Yes
Network Load Balancing	Yes	Yes
Windows PowerShell	Yes	Yes
Server Core Installation Option	Yes	Yes
Server Manager	Yes	Yes
SMB Direct and SMB over RDMA	Yes	Yes
Software-Defined Networking	No	Yes
Storage Migration Service	Yes	Yes
Storage Replica	Yes, one partnership and one resource group with a single 2 TB volume	Yes, unlimited
Storage Spaces	Yes	Yes
Storage Spaces Direct	No	Yes
Volume Activation Services	Yes	Yes
VSS (Volume Shadow Copy Service) Integration	Yes	Yes
Windows Server Update Services	Yes	Yes
Windows System Resource Manager	Yes	Yes
Server License Logging	Yes	Yes
Inherited Activation	As guest, if hosted on Datacenter	Can be a host or a guest
Work Folders	Yes	Yes

Once you choose what roles are going on your server, you must then decide how you're going to install Windows Server 2025. There are two ways to install Windows Server 2025. You can upgrade a Windows Server 2012 R2 (or above) machine to Windows Server 2025, or you can do a clean install of Windows

Server 2025. If you are running any version of Server before 2012 R2, you must first upgrade to Windows Server 2012 R2 or 2016 before upgrading to Windows Server 2025. If you decide that you are going to upgrade, there are specific upgrade paths you must follow.

Your choice of Windows Server 2025 version is dictated by how your current network is designed. If you are building a network from scratch, then it's pretty straightforward. Just choose the Windows Server 2025 version based on your server's tasks. However, if you already have a version of Windows Server 2012 installed, you should follow the recommendations in Table 1-4, which briefly summarizes the supported upgrade paths to Windows Server 2025.

Table 1-4: Supported Windows Server 2025 Upgrade Path Recommendations

CURRENT SYSTEM	UPGRADED SYSTEM
Windows Server 2012 Standard	Windows Server 2016 Standard or Datacenter
Windows Server 2012 Datacenter	Windows Server 2016 Datacenter
Windows Server 2012 R2 Standard	Windows Server 2025 Standard or Datacenter
Windows Server 2012 R2 Datacenter	Windows Server 2025 Datacenter
Windows Server 2012 R2 Essentials	Windows Server 2025 Essentials
Hyper-V Server 2012 R2	Hyper-V Server 2025
Windows Storage Server 2016/2019/2022 Standard	Windows Storage Server 2025 Standard
Windows Storage Server 2016/2019/2022 Datacenter	Windows Storage Server 2025 Datacenter

Deciding on the Type of Installation

One of the final choices you must make before installing Windows Server 2025 is what type of installation you want. There are three ways to install Windows Server 2025.

Windows Server 2025 (Desktop Experience)

This is the version with which most administrators are familiar. This is the version that uses *Microsoft Management Console (MMC)* windows, and it is the version that allows the use of a mouse to navigate through the installation.

Windows Server 2025 Server Core

This is a bare-bones installation of Windows Server 2025. You can think of it this way: if Windows Server 2025 (Desktop Experience) is a top-of-the-line luxury car, then Windows Server 2025 Server Core is the stripped-down model with no air-conditioning, manual windows, and cloth seats. It might not be pretty to look at, but it gets the job done.

SERVER CORE

Here is an explanation of Server Core that I have used ever since it was introduced in Windows Server 2008.

I am a *huge* sports fan. I love watching sports on TV, and I enjoy going to games. If you have ever been to a hockey game, you know what a hockey goal looks like. Between hockey periods, the stadium workers often bring out a huge piece of Plexiglas onto the ice. There is a tiny square cut out of the bottom of the glass. The square is just a bit bigger than a hockey puck itself.

Now they pick some lucky fan out of the stands, give them a puck at center ice, and then ask them to shoot the puck into the net with the Plexiglas in front of it. If they get it through that tiny little square at the bottom of the Plexiglas, they win a car or some such great prize.

Well, Windows Server 2025 (Desktop Experience) is like regular hockey with a net, and Windows Server 2025 Server Core is the Plexiglas version.

Server Core supports a limited number of roles.

- Active Directory Certificate Services (AD CS)
- Active Directory Domain Services (AD DS)
- Active Directory Federation Services (AD FS)
- Active Directory Lightweight Directory Services (AD LDS)
- Active Directory Rights Management Services (AD RMS)
- Application Server
- DHCP Server
- DNS Server
- Fax Server
- File and Storage Services
- BITS Server
- BranchCache
- Hyper-V
- Network Policy and Access Services
- Print and Document Services
- Remote Access

- Remote Desktop Services
- Volume Activation Services
- Web Server (IIS)
- Windows Deployment Services
- Windows Server Update Services
- .NET Framework 3.5 Features
- .NET Framework 4.5 Features
- Streaming Media Services
- Failover Clustering
- iSCSI
- Network Load Balancing
- MPIO
- qWave
- Telnet Server/Client
- Windows Server Migration Tools
- Windows PowerShell

Server Core does not have the normal Windows interface or GUI. Almost everything has to be configured via the command line or, in some cases, using the Remote Server Administration Tools from a full version of Windows Server 2025. While this might scare off some administrators, it has the following benefits:

Reduced Management Because Server Core has a minimum number of applications installed, it reduces management effort.

Minimal Maintenance Only basic systems can be installed on Server Core, so it reduces the upkeep you would need to perform in a normal server installation.

Smaller Footprint Server Core requires only 1 GB of disk space to install and 2 GB of free space for operations.

Tighter Security With only a few applications running on a server, it is less vulnerable to attacks.

Server Core App Compatibility Feature on Demand Windows Server 2025 now includes Server Core App Compatibility feature on demand (FOD). This feature drastically improves the application compatibility of the Windows Server Core installation. It does this by containing a subset of components from Windows Server 2025 with the Desktop Experience, but without adding the Windows Server Desktop Experience graphical

environment. The advantage to this helps increase the functionality and compatibility of Windows Server 2025 Server Core while keeping it as lean as possible.

The prerequisites for Server Core are basic. It requires the Windows Server 2025 installation media, a product key, and the hardware on which to install it.

After you install the base operating system, you use PowerShell or the remote administrative tools to configure the network settings, add the machine to the domain, create and format disks, and install roles and features. It takes only a few minutes to install Server Core, depending on the hardware.

BETTER SECURITY

When I started in this industry more than 30 years ago, I was a programmer. I used to program computer hospital systems. When I switched to the networking world, I continued to work under contract with hospitals and with doctors' offices.

One problem I ran into is that many doctors are affiliated with hospitals, but they don't actually have offices within the hospital. Generally, they have offices either near the hospital or, in some cases, right across the street.

Here is the issue: Do we put servers in the doctors' offices, or do we make the doctor log into the hospital network through a remote connection? Doctors' offices normally don't have computer rooms, and we don't want to place a domain controller or server on someone's desk. It's just unsafe!

This is where Windows Server 2025 Server Core can come into play. Since it is a slimmed-down version of Windows and there is no GUI, it makes it harder for anyone in the office to hack into the system. Also, Microsoft introduced a new domain controller in Windows Server 2008 called a *read-only domain controller (RODC)*. As its name suggests, it is a read-only version of a domain controller (explained in detail later in this book).

With Server Core and an RODC, you can feel safer placing a server on someone's desk or in any office. Server Core systems allow you to place servers in areas that you would never have placed them before. This can be a great advantage to businesses that have small, remote locations without full server rooms.

Windows Server 2025 Nano Server

Windows Server 2016 introduced a new type of server installation called Nano Server. Nano Server allows an administrator to remotely administer the server operating system. It was primarily designed and optimized for private clouds and datacenters. Nano Server is very similar to Server Core, but the Nano Server operating system uses significantly smaller hard drive space, has no local logon capability, and only supports 64-bit applications and tools.

Removed Features

As with all new versions of Windows Servers, Microsoft always decides to remove or retire features or services that are no longer needed. The following are some of the Features and Services that have been removed:

Computer Browser The Computer Browser driver and service are deprecated due to being dated and insecure. Microsoft first disabled the Computer Browser driver by default in Windows 10.

NTLM All versions of NTLM (including LANMAN, NTLMv1, and NTLMv2) are no longer an active feature in development and they have been deprecated. NTLM will continue to function in Windows Server 2025, but using NTLM calls should be replaced by calls to Negotiate.

Remote Mailslots Remote Mailslots are deprecated. They are an unreliable and insecure IPC method.

TLS 1.0 and TLS 1.1 These versions of TLS are disabled by default due to security concerns.

Windows Management Instrumentation Command Line (WMIC) WMIC is disabled by default on Windows Server 2025 installations and will be completely removed in a future release. PowerShell for WMI is recommended as a replacement.

VBScript VBScript is deprecated and will be available as a feature on-demand before it is removal from the operating system.

WebDAV Redirector service This service is deprecated and is not installed by default on Windows Server 2025.

IIS 6 Management Console The IIS 6 Management console has been removed. Microsoft stopped development of the console in Windows Server 2019.

WordPad Windows Server 2025 has removed WordPad. Microsoft recommends that you use either Microsoft Word for rich text documents and Notepad for plain text documents.

SMTP Server The SMTP Server and supporting tools have been removed from Windows Server 2025.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced you to Windows Server 2025. I explained the advantages of Windows Server 2025. Choosing the right server operating system depends on the roles and features that you need for your organizational needs.

The proper operating system depends on the job functions and requirements that are needed to set your network up properly.

When choosing how to set up Windows Server 2025, there are different ways that you can set up how the system functions. You can choose between using the GUI version of Windows Server 2025 or a non-GUI version (Server Core).

I also talked about what features and roles have been removed or are no longer being developed is an important task. Administrators need to understand what roles or features that they need for their organization. Administrators do not want to purchase an operating system if the role or feature that you need is being removed.