

Microsoft adds SSE4.2 to the list of Windows 11 compatibility standards

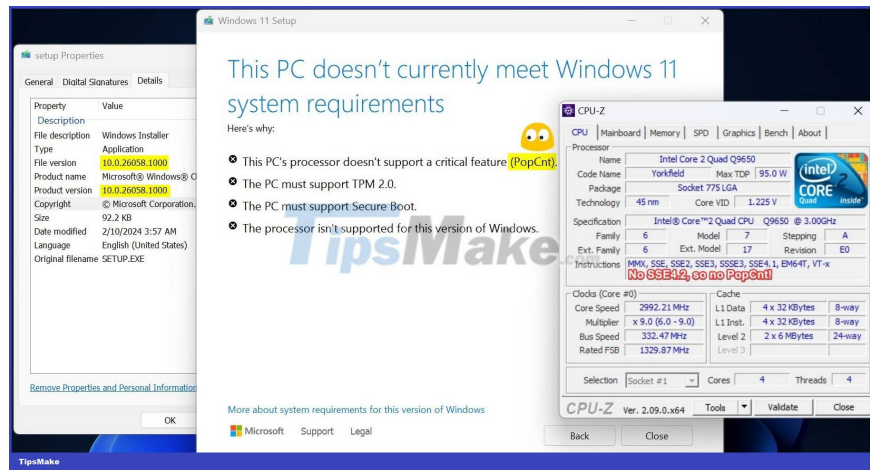
Windows 11 is about to turn three years old, but the compatible hardware requirements (and a host of related hassles) remain unchanged.

You still need an Intel 8th Gen, AMD Ryzen 2nd Gen (or newer) processor with some additional features to be able to run the OS in officially supported mode with the full experience. In fact, this requirement is generally quite easy to bypass, allowing users with older hardware to still run Windows 11 relatively well. However, with Windows 11 version 24H2, things are changing.

It is almost certain that Windows 11 version 24H2 (preview) requires POPCNT to boot. In other words, CPUs without POPCNT cannot run the 24H2 build anymore, even with the existing modifications. Microsoft recently added a corresponding registry to the Windows registry, refuting some speculation that the POPCNT requirement was only a temporary measure. The setup process will now also display a POPCNT missing warning when installing the 24H2 version on computer systems with outdated hardware.

In the latest Canary build 26063, the list of compatible blocks has been added with another value. "BlockedBYSSE4.2" is now responsible for determining whether your processor supports the SSE4.2 instruction set. You can check by launching Registry Editor and navigating to Computer\HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\AppCompatFlags\CompatMarkers\GE24H2.

Maybe many people will feel uncomfortable about Microsoft being too strict in blocking old hardware from running its new operating system version. However, remember that SSE4.2 is an instruction set that was introduced 16 years ago. Whether you like it or not, many new features on Windows require more modern hardware. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that old processors no longer have the necessary capabilities to give users the fullest experience when running an operating system that is too modern for them.



The story of POPCNT is nothing new in the Microsoft world. Even Windows 10, considered an "omnivorous" operating system in terms of hardware compatibility, had to remove some chips without POPCNT. Starting with the April 2018 Update, Windows 10 cannot run on certain Intel mobile chips due to an error in the no longer supported graphics driver.

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