Knowledge Base

Comments about Upgrade with a new Windows Version

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When installing a new Windows version, there are sometimes complications when detecting the audio hardware, which might result in our PCI / PCIe audio interfaces not or only partially working. A common example would be the upgrade from Windows 7 or Windows 8.1 to Windows 10, yet even upgrading from Windows Vista to Windows 7, some common issues should be checked.

There are two possibilites to install a new version of Windows:

1. A complete new installation, without taking over data and drivers.
2. An upgrade installation, where Windows is attempting to take over all data and drivers.

As long as you have the possibility to choose, it is recommended to choose the first option. In this article , we are providing some comments to make sure our audio interfaces work without issues when making a fresh Windows installation.

However, in most cases you will prefer the second option in order to avoid loosing data and to keep all installed software applications. This article describes what you should check and might encounter when you are using one of our PCI / PCIe interfaces in such a scenario.

Upgrade of Windows

After you familarized yourself with the steps, you can perform the actual upgrade to the new Windows version.

Installation of the chipset / system drivers

After the Windows installation, visit the website of your PC manufacturer and/or the website for the mainboard that is installed in your PC and find there the latest chipset and system drivers for your computer and mainboard for the Windows version you have installed. In many cases this will be one combined download package with all drivers included, however in some cases it can be separate driver and download packages that are each required. Each manufacturer of the used components provides information about it. These drivers are required, including drivers for an onboard audio hardware if available (which does not need to be disabled).

Background: the mainboard in your computer contains several components such as a PCI/PCIe controller that communicates between the CPU and the PCI/PCIe accessories. Also a USB controller that communicates with USB devices is integrated. As your ESI product, these components also need drivers for Windows to make use of them. Yet alone due to performance and compatibility reasons, it is required that these drivers are matching for the Windows version you are using. Microsoft includes basic drivers for many components with Windows, however the manufacturers of those are updating these drivers regularily.

More than half of all problems we get reported in our tech support after new Windows installations are caused by missing or outdated chipset drivers. Without the chipset drivers you can run into performance problems (like drop outs when recording or playing audio), the system could be a bit slow and in some cases it might even be impossible to install additional drivers such as the ones offered by us.

Check Device Manager

To verify everything is OK, it is recommended to look into the device manager (*Control Panel* > *System* > *Device Manager*). You should not see any unknown devices there and no devices that are shown with a question or exclamation mark (with the exception of a possible PCI / PCIe audio interface from us when you did not remove it from your PC before installing Windows). If there are any unknown devices, it is required hat you install the drivers for it first, before you install the driver for your ESI product.

If your ESI product is not listed there, it could indicate a problem with the chipset drivers (see above) or the hardware is not recognized as a component in your system, which usually means that it mechanically is not installed properly in the mainboard slot or that it might have been removed temporarily during the Windows upgrade.

Download of the latest driver

Make sure that you are using the latest driver for your ESI product. Go to the download area on our site and choose the product and your Windows version. Check if there is actually a driver for your Windows version, even though in many cases it is actually possible to install drivers from previous Windows versions (i.e. many of our Windows 8.1 compatible drivers work without issues also under Windows 10). If you are not sure, check our Knowledge Base for information about your product and the Windows version and / or contact our technical support .

Installation of the hardware und driver

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After the download, the ZIP file has to be unzipped. The ZIP file contains usually an installation program that has to be launched. Then follow the instructions on screen. The program prepares your system for the installation of the driver, which will happen later (at least when rebooting next time).

If you install a driver version without an installation program, the download page, our Knowledge Base or the printed manual for your product will contain installation instructions.

Please note that even when Windows took over an existing driver from the previous Windows installation, we strongly recommend to install the latest version.

What needs to be done, when the hardware is not detected?

In most cases, after the installation (see above) and a reboot (see below), the audio hardware is available for usage. If that does not happen, check these steps:

1. It is sometimes possible that a simple reboot of the system is required, Windows will then detect the hardware and install the drivers automatically.
2. You can force Windows to detect the new hardware in the *Device Manager* by uninstalling / deleting the corresponding enties and then reboot the system.
3. Alternatively, you can use the *Update Driver* function (right mouse click on the entry in *Device Manager*). If Windows then asks you to select a device, **always** select the entry with the term *Controller*, never with *Audio* in it.
4. When steps 2 and 3 are not helping, remove the entries in Device Manager, then start the installation program for the driver again and after that reboot the system.
5. If step 4 does not work, it might be needed that the hardware has to be removed from the PC. Launch the installation program for the driver again and once completed, shut your PC. Remove the hardware and start the PC. Once the system has booted, shut it down again and turn it off. Then you install the hardware into the PC again (if available you can also use a different PCI or PCIe slot). Now the driver will finally be installed.
6. If this also does not work, make sure one more time that the chipset drivers are up to date (see above) and then repeat steps 1 - 5.

If none of this helps, contact our technical support . There might be a hardware problem then.

Reboot

After the installation of the driver it is always recommended to reboot your system manually, even if Windows does not prompt you to do it.

It can in some cases be a good idea to change the default audio device for playback under Windows, as explained in this article .

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