Requirements

The following requirements drove the specification of Windows NT back in 1989:

- Provide a true 32-bit, preemptive, reentrant, virtual memory OS.
- Run on multiple hardware architectures and platforms.
- Run and scale well on symmetric multiprocessing systems.
- Be a great distributed computing platform, both as a network client and as a server.
- Run most existing 16-bit MS-DOS and Microsoft Windows 3.1 applications.
- Meet government requirements for POSIX 1003.1 compliance.
- Meet government and industry requirements for OS security.
- Be easily adaptable to the global market by supporting Unicode.

Design Goals

According to these requirements, the Windows NT design team adopted the following design goals at the beginning of the project:

- Extensibility
- Portability
- Reliability and robustness
- Compatibility
- Performance