



# Adobe CS Activation

Page **Discussion**

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Adobe Creative Suite (CS) was a software collection released from 2003 to 2013, when Adobe replaced it with Creative Cloud (CC).

The suite went through several major versions:

- CS (2003)
- CS2 (2005)
- CS3 (2007)
- CS4 (2008)
- CS5 (2010)
- CS5.5 (2011)
- CS6 (2012)



The Adobe Creative Suite (CS) Support Page Stating The Shutdown of Activation Servers

## Background [ edit | edit source ]

When Adobe introduced the creative suite in 2003, Adobe implemented a new online activation system that wasn't present in Adobe's previous products. This system required users to connect to Adobe's servers to verify their serial number before the software could be used.

## Adobe Creative Suite Activation Server Shutdown and Impact [ edit | edit source ]

### Technical Issue [ edit | edit source ]

When the installer is run from any source, the setup program will try to contact Adobe; either during the installation or post-install when the user tries to run the application for the first time. It will attempt to verify their serial number. The program will fail to contact Adobe, as the server it uses for serial number verification has been shut down. After trying for a few seconds or minutes the setup program will display an error, as it cannot contact the activation servers; and the applications will not be activated, rendering them in an inoperable state.

### Non-existent solution: [ edit | edit source ]

Nancy OShea, a 'Community Expert' and Moderator on the Adobe forums, has made the following reference to a method to obtain a new CS3 installer that does not require activation:<sup>[1]</sup>

The correct answer below describes how to obtain a new CS3 installer, a new serial number that does not require activation and the procedures necessary to make it work. Read them carefully.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

However, the link she provided to "*Re-activating CS3(Updated)*" does not work as of February 17th, 2025. This was archived in 2014.<sup>[3]</sup>



## Affected Versions [ edit | edit source ]

As of February 2025, Adobe has shut down the activation servers for:<sup>[4]</sup>

- CS1
- CS2
- CS3
- CS4
- CS5

In addition Adobe has also shut down the deactivation servers for CS6 which prevents users from reinstalling the software or moving the software to a new device. Adobe support is also no longer able to increase the activation limit or remove activated devices.<sup>[5][6][7]</sup>

## Impact on License Owners of Adobe Creative Suite [ edit | edit source ]

The server shutdown creates serious issues for legitimate owners who purchased the software:

- Unable to install or reinstall the software, even from original media
- Cannot activate existing installations

## Adobe's Response [ edit | edit source ]

Adobe has cited "aging activation servers" as the reason for the shutdown. While the company claims to have:

- Sent notification emails to registered users
- Provided modified installers that don't require activation

Many users report never receiving this communication, particularly those who didn't register their products when registration was optional. Without registration, Adobe had no way of having the contact information of these customers who did not complete an optional registration.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Workaround for CS4 [ edit | edit source ]

If you still have an prior, duly-activated installation:

- Install desired components from CS4. Don't waste time trying to activate.
- Copy the amtlib.dll files from each old install subdirectory to the respective subdirectories in the new install. Everything runs without the aggravation of useless reminders.

## References [ edit | edit source ]

- ↑ <https://community.adobe.com/t5/download-install-discussions/cs3-activation-branched-from-cs2-activation/t5-p/9689902>
- ↑ <https://community.adobe.com/t5/download-install-discussions/cs3-activation-branched-from-cs2-activation/t5-m-p/9689903#M136927>
- ↑ <sup>3.0</sup> <sup>3.1</sup> "Re-activating CS3" . 12 Aug 2014. Archived from the original  on 4 Dec 2014 – via Adobe forums.
- ↑ <https://helpx.adobe.com/creative-suite.html>
- ↑ "Solved: activation-deactivation feature for CS6 - Adobe Product Community - 14593664" . *Adobe Community*. Retrieved 2025-08-21.
- ↑ "CS6 activation after successful deactivation fails - Adobe Product Community - 14898105" . *Adobe Community*. Retrieved 2025-08-21.
- ↑ "adobe perpetual license not being honored class action lawsuit : r/Adobe" . *Reddit*. Retrieved 2025-08-21.
- ↑ <https://community.adobe.com/t5/photoshop-ecosystem-discussions/activation-server-retirement/t5-m-p/11491977>

require activation and the procedures necessary to make it work. Read them carefully.  
[Re-activating CS3 \(Updated\)](#)  
Post back if you have any questions.  
Nancy O'Shea— Product User, Community Expert & Moderator

Nancy O'Shea on adobe forums linking to a method to install software after activation servers have been phased out, that does not work.

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