Install winget on Windows Server and activate preview features

4sysops.com/archives/install-winget-on-windows-server-and-activate-preview-features

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Wolfgang Sommergut Mon, Jul 17 2023 windows server, deployment 6

Microsoft's latest package manager is included in Windows 10 and 11. However, if you want to use winget on Windows Server or try a preview version, you will need to install it manually. In prerelease versions, you can enable experimental features.

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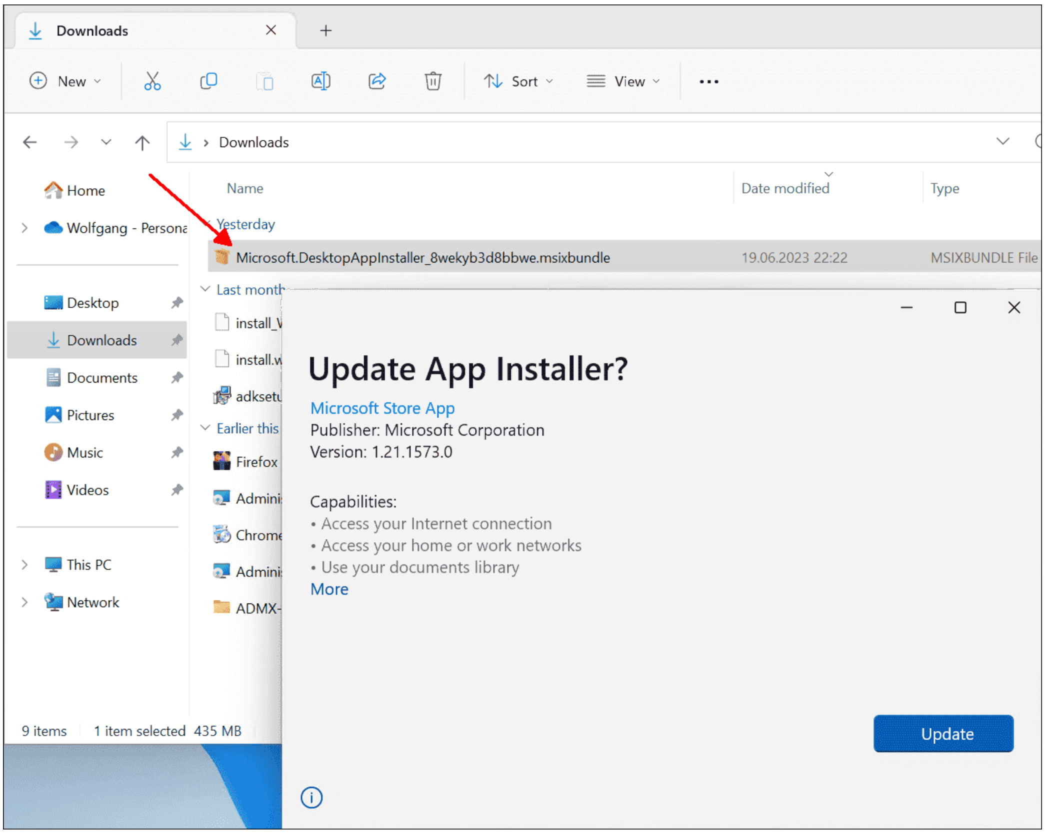
Wolfgang Sommergut has over 20 years of experience in IT journalism. He has also worked as a system administrator and as a tech consultant. Today he runs the German publication WindowsPro.de.

winget is a package manager similar to Chocolatey or Linux-apt, which can install programs from a repository, as well as update and remove them. The command-line tool is included in Windows 10 and 11, albeit currently only in version 1.4.x.

Since then, there have been significant developments in winget, and the latest release is currently 1.6.1573. This preview version offers some experimental features that you can try out and use to a certain extent.

winget as part of App Installer

To do this, you need to download the desired release of App Installer, which includes the corresponding preview of winget. From the list of files offered on GitHub, select the ones with the file extension *msixbundle*. You can start the installation by double-clicking them in Explorer.



Microsoft.DesktopAppInstaller_8wekyb3d8bbwe.msixbundle 19.06.2023 22:22 MSIXBUNDLE File

Update App Installer?

Microsoft Store App
Publisher: Microsoft Corporation
Version: 1.21.1573.0

Capabilities:
• Access your Internet connection
• Access your home or work networks
• Use your documents library
More

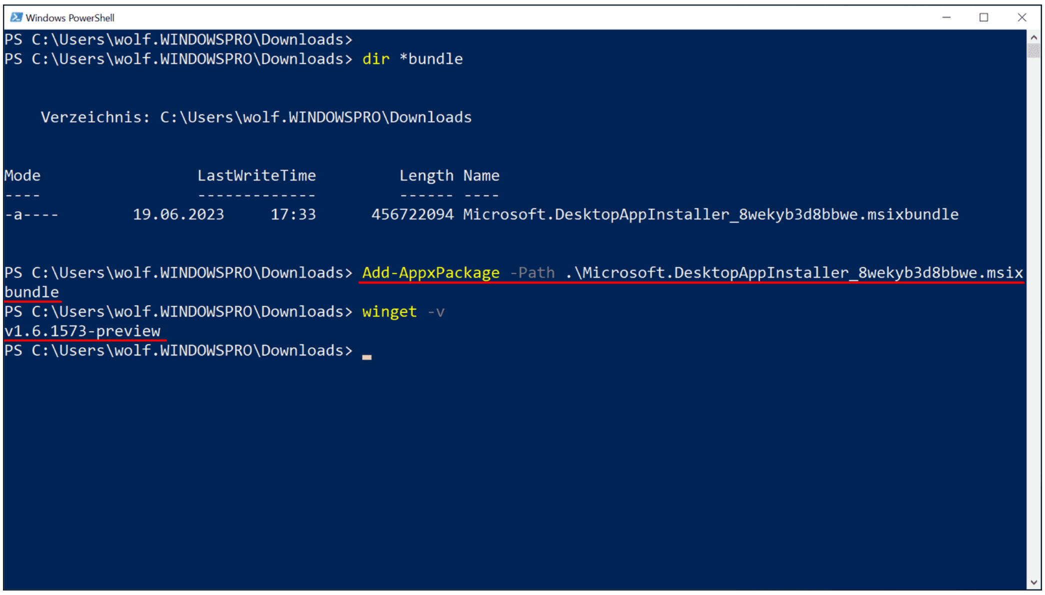
If App Installer is already present on a system you can start an update by double clicking it in Explorer

Alternatively, you can execute the following command in PowerShell:

Add-AppxPackage -Path .\\Microsoft.DesktopAppInstaller_8wekyb3d8bbwe.msixbundle

After that, running the following should confirm a successful update:

winget -v



```
PS C:\Users\wolf.WINDOWSPRO\Downloads>
PS C:\Users\wolf.WINDOWSPRO\Downloads> dir *bundle


    Verzeichnis: C:\Users\wolf.WINDOWSPRO\Downloads


Mode                 LastWriteTime         Length Name
----                 -------------         ------ ----
-a----        19.06.2023     17:33      456722094 Microsoft.DesktopAppInstaller_8wekyb3d8bbwe.msixbundle


PS C:\Users\wolf.WINDOWSPRO\Downloads> Add-AppxPackage -Path .\Microsoft.DesktopAppInstaller_8wekyb3d8bbwe.msix
bundle
PS C:\Users\wolf.WINDOWSPRO\Downloads> winget -v
v1.6.1573-preview
PS C:\Users\wolf.WINDOWSPRO\Downloads> _
```

Installing a winget preview on Windows 11

Install winget on Windows Server

Officially, Microsoft does not support winget on Windows Server, but it can still be installed there (except on Server Core). However, dependencies need to be resolved first because VCLibs 14 and UI.Xaml.2.7 are required as prerequisites.

Otherwise, you will encounter this error message:

Windows cannot install package Microsoft.WindowsStore_22210.1401.13.0_x64__8wekyb3d8bbwe because this package depends on a framework that could not be found. Provide the framework "Microsoft.UI.Xaml.2.7" published by "CN=Microsoft Corporation, O=Microsoft Corporation, L=Redmond, S=Washington, C=US", with neutral or x64 processor architecture and minimum version 7.2109.13004.0, along with this package to install.

To download Microsoft.UI.Xaml 2.7.3, you can obtain it as a NuGet package, change the file extension from .nupkg to .zip, and extract the archive. The Appx package can then be found in the following location:

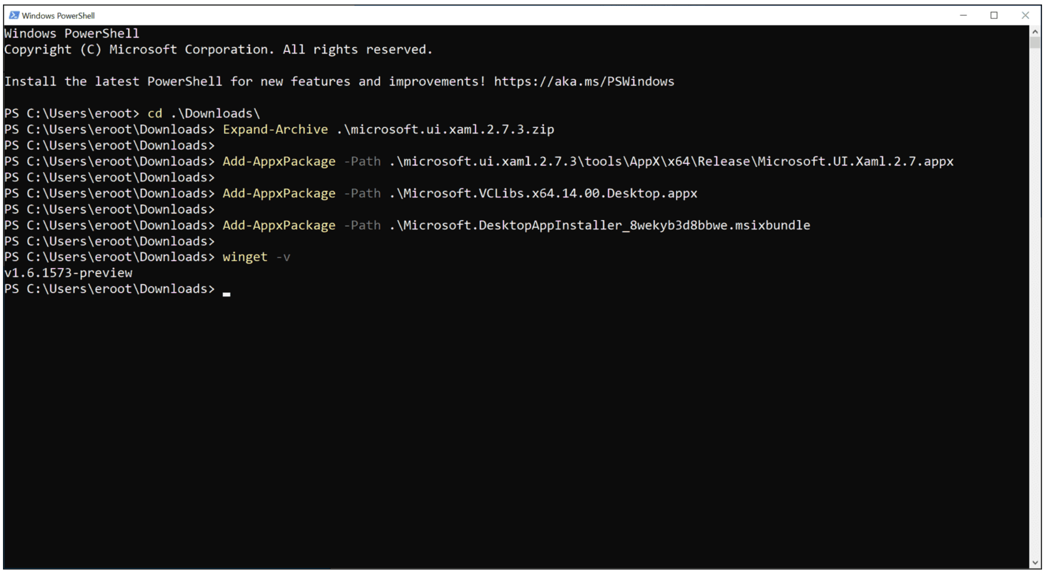
.\microsoft.ui.xaml.2.7.3\tools\AppX\x64\Release.

Install it using the following command:

Add-AppxPackage -Path .\tools\AppX\x64\Release\Microsoft.UI.Xaml.2.7.appx

You can find the Visual C++ runtime library for all supported architectures on this page. After downloading it, install it as follows:

```
Add-AppxPackage -Path .\Microsoft.VCLibs.x64.14.00.Desktop.appx
```



```
Windows PowerShell
Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Install the latest PowerShell for new features and improvements! https://aka.ms/PSWindows

PS C:\Users\eroot> cd .\Downloads\
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads> Expand-Archive .\microsoft.ui.xaml.2.7.3.zip
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads>
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads> Add-AppxPackage -Path .\microsoft.ui.xaml.2.7.3\tools\AppX\x64\Release\Microsoft.UI.Xaml.2.7.appx
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads>
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads> Add-AppxPackage -Path .\Microsoft.VCLibs.x64.14.00.Desktop.appx
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads>
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads> Add-AppxPackage -Path .\Microsoft.DesktopAppInstaller_8wekyb3d8bbwe.msixbundle
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads>
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads> winget -v
v1.6.1573-preview
PS C:\Users\eroot\Downloads> _
```

Installing winget on Windows Server 2022

Finally, as described above, add the App Installer:

```
Add-AppxPackage Microsoft.DesktopAppInstaller\_8wekyb3d8bbwe.msixbundle
```

Enable experimental features

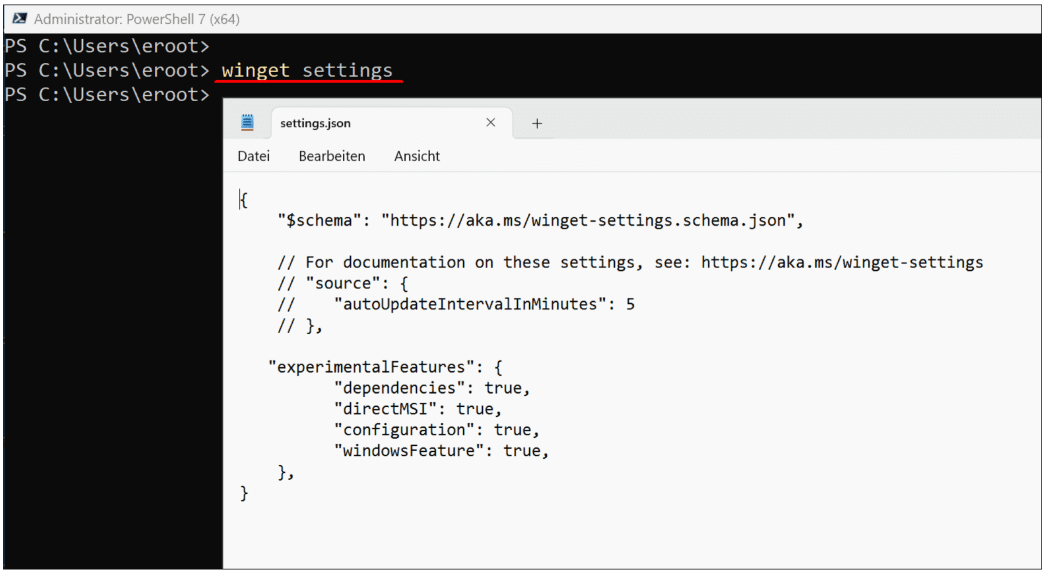
In the current version, winget offers several features that are in an experimental state. These include configuration management based on PowerShell DSC, installing optional Windows features when an application depends on them, or freezing an app to a specific version ("PIN").

Some of these features need to be explicitly enabled by adding an entry to the JSON configuration file. To do so, run the following command:

```
winget settings
```

This opens the settings in an editor. By default, the file contains only the schema declaration and some commented lines. You can insert the following block, for example:

```
"experimentalFeatures": {

"dependencies": true,

"directMSI": true,

"configuration": true,

"windowsFeature": true,

},
```



```
PS C:\Users\eroot>
PS C:\Users\eroot> winget settings
PS C:\Users\eroot>
```

```
{
    "$schema": "https://aka.ms/winget-settings.schema.json",

    // For documentation on these settings, see: https://aka.ms/winget-settings
    // "source": {
    //    "autoUpdateIntervalInMinutes": 5
    // },

   "experimentalFeatures": {
          "dependencies": true,
          "directMSI": true,
          "configuration": true,
          "windowsFeature": true,
    },
}
```

Enabling experimental features through JSON configuration

Since editing the JSON format can be tricky, it is important to validate the results to avoid invalid configuration. In PowerShell 7.x, you can do so with the following command:

Test-Json -Json (Get-Content -raw $env:LOCALAPPDATA\Packages\Microsoft.DesktopAppInstaller_8wekyb3d8bbwe\LocalState\settings.json)

Afterward, the new commands, such as *configure*, should be available in winget. You can verify this by using the following command:

winget features

Summary

While winget is included in the current versions of Windows 10 and 11, the operating systems ship with an older stable release. If you want to try out newer features in the previews, you need a corresponding version of the App Installer.

On client systems, you can easily install it through Explorer. However, on Windows Server, you need to set up two libraries before adding the App Installer using PowerShell.

If you want to use experimental features, you may need to unlock them by adding an entry to the JSON configuration file in some cases.