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[Windows Tip] Disable "This App is Preventing Shutdown or Restart" Screen

Recently an AskVG reader contacted me regarding this annoying issue. The reader wanted to completely disable the screen which appears when you try to log off, restart or shut down in Windows OS and shows a list of apps which are preventing the operation. Actually this screen can be disabled using a simple Registry tweak which has been shared a long time back in following exclusive AskVG article:

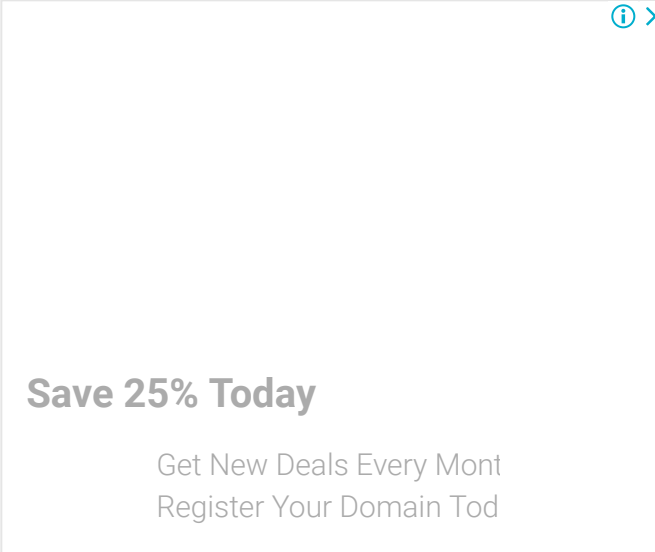
[Collection of Best Registry Tweaks to Speed Up Your Windows](#)

Today another reader contacted me regarding same problem, so I decided to create a separate tutorial for it so that it can help other people in addressing the same issue.

Actually it's not a problem or issue. It's a feature by design. This feature is called app manager or program manager. It automatically detects the running apps list as soon as the user performs a power operation such as restart or shut down and if the user has some unsaved work in any app, the program notifies the user about it. This feature shows following message on screen as soon as the user tries to log off, restart or shut down:

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Closing apps and shutting down / restarting / signing out

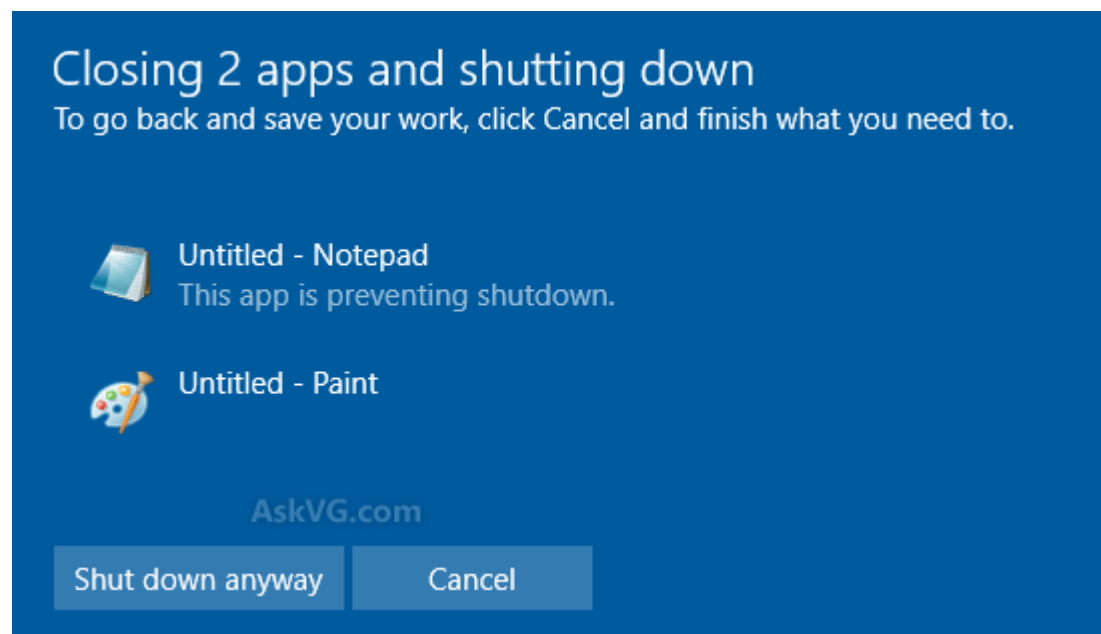
To go back and save your work, click Cancel and finish what you need to.

Running app name

This app is preventing shutdown / This app is preventing you from restarting / This app is preventing you from signing out.

Two buttons are given "Shut down / restart / sign out anyway" and "Cancel". You can click on the first button to end task of the running apps and perform power operation. If you want to go back and save the work, you can click on Cancel button.

Following screenshot shows this feature live in action:



- [\[Tip\] Enable Dark Mode UI on All Websites in Chrome on Android Mobile Phones](#)
- [\[Tip\] How to Enable Dark Mode in Chrome on Android Mobile Phones](#)
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If you are also getting this screen frequently and want to turn this feature off, this tutorial will help you.

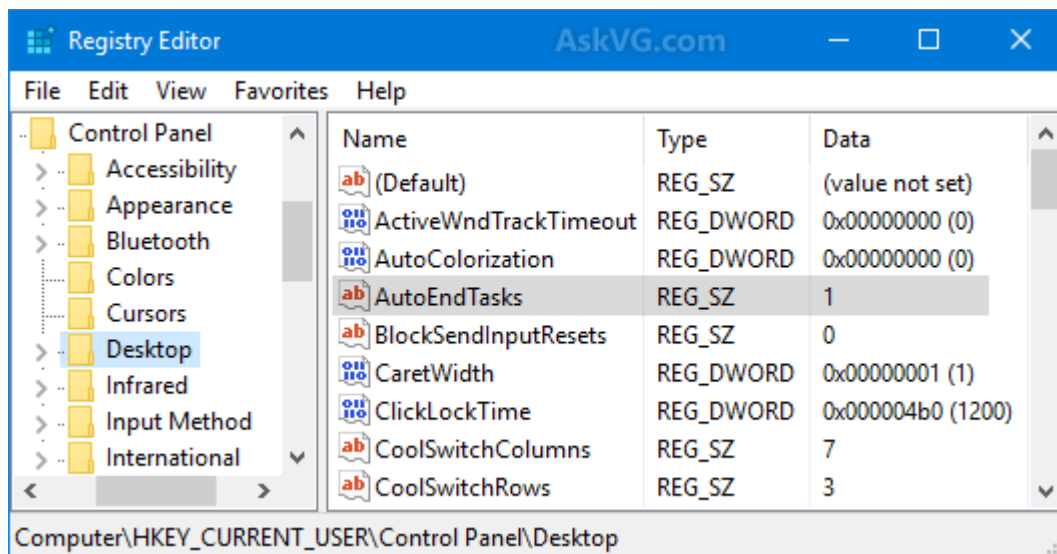
You can follow these simple steps to disable the annoying "This app is preventing..." message screen:

1. Type **regedit** in RUN or Start search box and press Enter. It'll open **Registry Editor**.

2. Now go to following key:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop

3. In right-side pane, right-click on empty area and create a new String **AutoEndTasks** and set its value to **1**



4. That's it. Close Registry Editor and restart your computer to take effect.



Now Windows will automatically end task of all running apps without showing you "This app is preventing..." message on screen whenever you want to sign out, restart or shut down your computer.

If you are worried about editing Registry and want a **ready-made Registry script** to do the whole task automatically, you can download the Registry script from the "Collection of Registry tweaks" topic mentioned in the beginning of this article.

Also Check:

- [Collection of Windows 10 Hidden Secret Registry Tweaks](#)
- [Best Windows 8 Tips-n-Tricks for Windows 8.1 and Windows 10](#)
- [Best Windows 7 Registry Tweaks and Tips Which Work in Windows 8 and Later](#)

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About the author: Vishal Gupta (also known as VG) has been awarded with Microsoft MVP (Most Valuable Professional) award. He has written several tech

articles for popular newspapers and magazines and has also appeared in a few tech shows on TV channels. ([Connect with Us](#))

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Comments

NOTE: Older comments have been removed to reduce database overhead.

Martin Pollard

Which versions of Windows does this work on? Your screenshot shows Windows 10 (*spit*), but nothing in the text of the article indicates that it's specific to Windows 10 (*spit*).

VG

^^ This trick will work on all Windows versions. The image shown in screenshot may differ.

frank

Why would you "want" to disable this protective program?

Nilanko Halder

@frank Because some people like me press the power button and close the lid hoping Windows will power off but upon waking up in the morning, you find your computer still on just because of that sh*tty "feature" that prevented it from shutting down and you realize how much power went waste keeping the computer running whole night for no reason!

Crysta T Lacey

Hi VG,

This does not solve the problem on Build 14295 and I DO NOT have the problem on any other builds or windows.

Mine was already set to 1 and NO apps are reported running but I still get the Funky message that has started showing up on this build to "Go Back and Close Your Work.... ?????

I tried setting it to "0" Restarted, message was still there, set back to "1", Restarted, message was still there.

It is very annoying and slows down Shutdown.

Best Regards,

Crysta

VG

^^ The trick has been successfully tested on Windows 10 latest public November Update build 10586. If its not working on latest Insider Preview build, try to create new DWORD with the same name and value. Please check and confirm.

MYCO

@ Crysta

there are other registry entries you could check. i have this list that might help (these might not be the exact words used in the registry but i think they will be close enough. This is just a text file i made from before when i was looking for ways to make shutting down faster)

these were adjusted by level

- Time to wait when a program crashes
- Time to wait for services to end before shutting down
- Time to wait before ending programs with errors

these ones you just enable/disable. i think.

- Closing non-responsive programs automatically
- Closing applications that have no visible windows automatically

sorry i could not tell you where in the registry these are found cos i've 4gotten. You might want to ask VG, he more familiar with reg tweaks. he might know where these are located in the registry.

VG

^^ Their Registry entries details are given in following topic: :)

<https://www.askvg.com/collection-of-registry-tweaks-for-windows-7/>

Brett

The AutoEndTasks registry entry tells the computer to always shut down without saving data. I would not advocate this setting without explaining that data could be lost if the user is not very careful.

I regard the "app preventing shutdown" screen as Windows' way of reminding me that I need to save my document. It's very clunky, but at least it gives me a chance to go back instead of shutting down without saving.

I liked the Windows XP behavior, where I could watch the apps shutting down one by one, prompting me to save a document when needed. Is there any way to restore this behavior in Windows 10?

Windows XP would sometimes prompt "The system cannot end this program because it is waiting for a response from you." But Windows 10 doesn't seem to recognize programs awaiting a response, at least not during shutdown. Nor does it give me any chance to save documents before going to the "closing apps and shutting down" screen. I hope there is a registry fix for this!

Andrew Freedman

IT WORKED! You are totally awesome!!

For the longest time I could not get win 10 to shut down or restart without hitting the power button.

CyborG

Hi VG,

I actually don't want to disable it. It is a very good thing. I just want to find out what it is and kill it on msconfig/startup. So NO crab next time...

CyborG

also can send the answer on my email.

It is slowing my laptop from the beginning. I want to find out what the heck it is.

and try to give me a manual button. So I can press the button like "end, delete, kill, destroy". It'll be a great feeling. You know what this all about right? Thanks a lot in advance man.

VG

^^ Post your HijackThis log file in following topic first:

<https://www.askvg.com/is-your-system-infected-with-a-virus-spyware-adware-trojan/>

RonIT

This is horrible advice to give as it is solving issues elsewhere within the users system by disabling an important protective feature within Windows. If this screen is becoming bothersome then have one of 3 root causes.

- A. A very poorly coded application that is causing issues with shutdown and the system never fully shuts down after this screen is displayed.
- B. This message is displayed for only a short time while Windows is asking if applications are ready to be closed and all data integrity is intact.
- C. The message is telling the user that there are applications with unsaved data that will be lost if using the shut down anyway command.

If you read this and think this registry tweak is anything but an insanely terrible idea which one should be ashamed of themselves for even considering, then you should not be anywhere near the Windows Registry and should have supervision whenever you even think about using a computer.

ER KUNFÚ DE TRIANA

Hello everyone.

First of all, I'm sorry for the level of English, I'm with the help of the google translator.

My problem is not exactly like the one in the article but it's similar. The purpose is the same, cause the delay in turning off the PC, what varies is the message ...

"Windows Task Host ... Waiting for programs to close Wait ... or Force close"

My problem is worse than the one quoted in the article, because in my case I do not know which program causes the delay to turn off, it does not indicate it.

I know that the author of the article has acted in good faith. The article had a good direction but it did not work for me.

Before giving this article I did what in most forums say, analyze if there is a virus. I have analyzed the PC with Eset, Avast, Malwarebytes and AdwCleaner and has not even given a sad pop up. After talking about disabling programs that start with Windows, I did not do it because I have only enabled my antivirus, which I also disabled to check it without being the problem. Then I talked about going disabling services and processes and restarting, which I have not done because it is a long task with many reboots and the danger of making a mistake. Almost it is preferable to restore the PC from the factory before going disabling processes and services and restarting, at least if you restore, you are sure that the problem will be solved.

As I understood in the article, this registry modification has basically two functions ...

- 1.- Do not get the message that there are applications that do not let Windows shut down.
- 2.- Force Windows to forcefully close said program / application / process / service

Reflecting on these solutions, I think that although some AutoEndTasks works, this does not actually solve the error, but rather "hides" it, because the blocking of that process, service and / or program that causes Windows not to shut down it is correctly due to a corrupted or corrupted file.

The real solution would be to find the program, service and process, uninstall it and reinstall it again in clean, so that there is no corrupted or damaged file.

It is my humble opinion. If anyone knew how to come up with another solution, I would appreciate it if I said so.

Greetings.

Jim

I frequently got this same message but in my Windows including Windows 10 now Windows would seemingly just time out when no response would be given and the default action was to proceed with Shutdown.

Now all of a sudden this has stopped and Windows will not shutdown without responding to the prompt. Can't be sure because I am not this patient but I believe on one occasion it appeared the shutdown process did timeout and Windows stayed up without shutting down.

Julio

After clicking Desktop, I do not find AutoEndTasks in that list below. After AutoColorization I have BlockSendInputResets, and no AutoEndTasks.

VG

^^ You need to create the new String.

Marinus

Julio, anove seems to have the same problem as I have:

After clicking Desktop, I do not find AutoEndTasks in that list below. After AutoColorization I have BlockSendInputResets, and no AutoEndTasks.

I am not familiar with "programming"the registry. Is a concrete example to be found somewhere how to go about creating a new string?

Bill

I have a similar problem, but different. I get the screen stating there is an app preventing shut down and the option to go back or shut down anyway. My problem is that the app is not identified. There is an ultra small icon that looks like it may have been intended to be the Excel icon but too small to tell and there are no excel files open that I can determine.

How do I identify the application and file that is causing the interference with shut down ?

thanks

ABP-Jr

I, too, had this problem of apps not allowing my Windows-10 computer to shut down. I got the message that I had to go back and close all apps first. So, I unwisely used some muscle and pulled the ac power plug. When plugging the cord back in and restarted, that message once again came up first but mouse and keyboard were inoperable. I pulled the plug again, waited about 10-seconds, then plugged it back in and restarted. Now, the desktop appears but the computer hangs with mouse and keyboard inoperable.

The computer just sits there hung. I even tried removing the hard drive and put it in a docking station but the Windows-7 computer said no files... ugh! I'm dead in the water! Thanks for whatever HELP you can provide !!!

VG

^^ Its very dangerous to forcefully switch off the computer while Windows is running. It might be possible that some system files are corrupt or some damage occurred in your hard disk drive. You should ask a technician to check the computer.

Bill

Still would like to know how to identify the offending application and file when the preventing shutdown notification comes up.

I was able to get rid of the notification and go straight to shut down by turning off background run for some apps including Sway which I think was the culprit, but this doesn't solve the problem of an open file in an application, just allows shutting down without fixing the problem. Any idea on where to look to see what application and file are holding up shut down ? All I see is an extremely small icon which I believe may be Sway.

Thanks

Bill

Twinklet

Hi I have the same problem but mine is stuck on the screen also with a little icon but cannot cancel or restart anyway. The screen is just blue with the message on.

Thanks so much in advance.

Brad

Thanks for the help, I have entered the line in regedit and am about to shutdown. If it doesn't work I'll come back, if it does I will be the happiest camper in Alabama. Thanks VG.

Bill

My solution only worked once. However, Sway was the culprit and I solved the problem by uninstalling Sway.

Still would like to know where to look to find the offending application and file. I just happened upon finding Sway, and uninstalling an application is not a good solution for this problem.

Bill

Wrong again ! Problem is back after just a couple exits. Looks like a small version of Excel icon. Not sure.

I still get the page that says an app is preventing shut down and can click on shut down anyway to close but the warning doesn't identify the application or the offending file. It just shows a very small green icon that could be any green

icon. I prefer not to guess and uninstall Excel because, in my case, I think I may have to reload all of Office and Visio.

Really need to know where I can find the identification of the problem application and file.

Thanks,

VG

^^ You should check Task Manager which 3rd party software is running in background.

dennis

This saved my sanity. I've been to discussions/tech advisories galore and nothing recommended has worked. This, however, worked. Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you ...

Mike

any ay to make this work for all users on a station ?

Democraps = Slavery

This worked - thank you! It's weird how this problem started from what seemed like outta nowhere. It's so annoying when you restart your computer and go do something and later come back to your machine only to then see that it never restarted, talk about pissing me off.

Cheers

CL

Hi, if i wanted to remove the AutoEndTasks from the registry, is there a way to do it? Thanks!

CL

I had previously used the mentioned method to overcome the issue of windows not shutting down and it works. However, now that I have updated Windows 10, I want to try disabling the AutoEndTasks to see if the updates have rectified any issues with Windows. However, going back to the registry, I no longer see AutoEndTasks in it.

VG

^^ If the DWORD doesn't exist in Registry, that means its already disabled.

Joshua Issac

This "feature" is a serious security vulnerability. I have seen many people click "log off" at their workstation, and walk away thinking they have logged out, and then this screen pops up, at which point any bystander can cancel the log-off process and look at the victim's files, e-mails, cookies, etc.

This is not a feature. It is a bug.

Cosmin Andone

The advise was very good and the now the computer shuts down normally. However, it does not install updates anymore because with this string it closes

all processes and the updates that would normally install upon restart or shutdown do not get to install. And now i have many updates which fail to install.

So I've deleted the string but no changes. I guess now i need help to remove the effects of the "AutoEndTasks" completely from my PC as it seems that even though deleted from the registries is still there and stops all apps/ updates upon shut down/restart. Can you help?

Thanks,
Cosmin

VG

^^ First of all the AutoEndTasks string will not affect Automatic Update feature. The string will only allow Windows to close running programs.

Secondly, there is no side effect of any Registry key. If you keep the string in registry, it does its work. If you remove it, it restores default settings. Nothing else.

There must be some other reasons behind your problem.

Fred

The explanation of why this feature, and its benefits exist makes perfect sense.....if it functioned properly. I go through the process of shutting down every app before shutting down windows, and it still happens, even though there is no unsaved work to back and save. The message never include an app by name, because none are running.

This is def a bug. I recently switched to a new, and larger SSD and a clean win10 install. For the first week or so my machine closed down cleanly every time, then it started happening again, and continues to happen 100% of the time, even if all I do is boot up, then shut down. Very annoying.

Soumya

Will it sign out automatically after some time if I click none of the buttons("Sign out anyway" or "Cancel)" or it will stay in the same window i.e. keep on showing those two buttons?

VG

^^ It'll wait for your input.

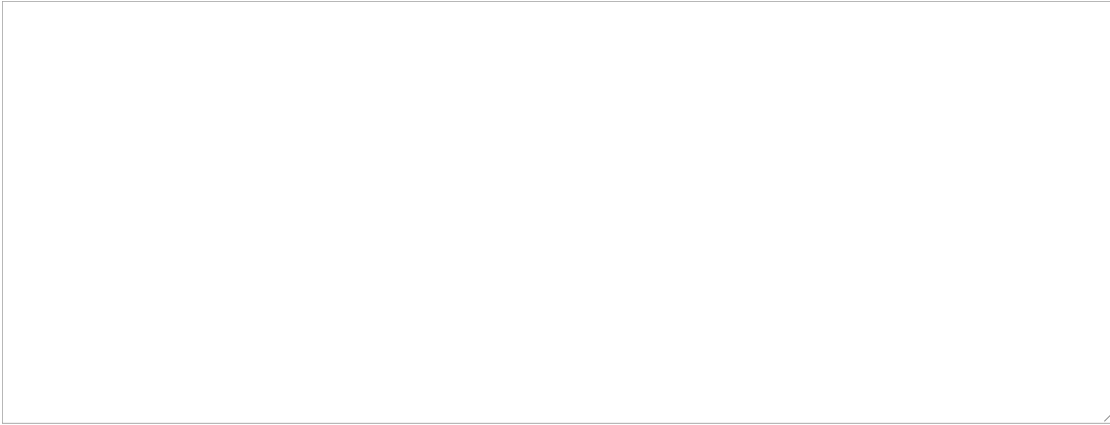
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