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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FactoryTalk Activation

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FactoryTalk Activation

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General Questions

FactoryTalk Activation is part of the FactoryTalk Services Platform and provides components that allow FactoryTalk-enabled products to use activation files generated by Rockwell Automation and distributed over the Internet. This removes the previous dependency on the availability of physical media to activate a Rockwell Automation software application. As a result, software activations can now be delivered, distributed, stored, backed-up or moved electronically.

What is the state of FactoryTalk Activation?

The [Product Support Chart](#) provides the complete list of Rockwell Automation Products supporting FactoryTalk Activation.

What is an activation file?

A text file that contains all of the activation information that is required for a software product to properly function. While the file is simply plain text, the contents of the file are protected by a signature. Copying an activation file to another computer will not activate software on that computer, because the signature held in the activation file is associated with a specific piece of hardware — an Ethernet address, a hard disk serial number, or a dongle.

What is a Host ID?

A Host ID is an identification (ID) code that uniquely identifies a hardware device. FactoryTalk Activation uses the Host ID to "lock" each activation file to a specific hardware device such as a stand-alone computer, a computer hosting the activations or a dongle. For a computer, the Host ID uses the hard disk drive or Ethernet card to identify the computer.

Tips for selecting an appropriate Host ID:

- *To prevent activations from failing unexpectedly at runtime, do not lock activations to virtual network adapters, such as those used for virtual private networks (VPN) or virtual machines. Instead, lock activations to the Host IDs of fixed devices such as hardware network adapters or hard disk serial numbers.*
- *For a laptop running in a docking station, both the computer and the docking station may have active network cards. In this case the Host ID box lists an Ethernet address for the network card in the laptop and a separate address for the card in the docking station. If you want your software activated for any laptop that uses the docking station, choose the docking station's Ethernet address as the Host ID. If you want the software on the laptop always activated, whether the computer is docked or not, then choose a Host ID that is always present on the laptop, such as the disk serial number. Use the FactoryTalk Activation Manager, both when the laptop is docked and undocked, to find a Host ID that is available in either case. You can see a list of Host IDs on the Get New Activations page.*

What activation types are available with FactoryTalk Activation?

- *Local "node-locked" activations*

- Shared “concurrent” activations

What is a node-locked activation?

A "node-locked" activation file can activate multiple instances of a Rockwell Automation software product for use on only this particular computer. This type of activation does not require a network connection. The activation is locked to a specific hardware ID. As a result, the software activation cannot be moved to another computer. If the activation file is copied to another computer, the software will not run on that computer.

What is a concurrent activation?

A type of activation that allows multiple computers across a network to use Rockwell Software products at the same time. There are two kinds of concurrent activations: floating activations, that “float” from an activation server to any computer that needs them, and borrowed activations, that are retrieved from a server for a specific period of time before expiring and returning automatically to the pool of available activations on the server.

How can I enable concurrent activations to behave in the same way as node-locked activations ?

An activation server can be set up on a single computer to serve licenses to itself in a non-networked environment.

How can I make an activation mobile ?

Rockwell Automation's new plug-and-play dongle (catalog number 9509-USBDONG2) now has storage capacity that you can use to activate software and to store activation files. NOTE: You cannot use a standard USB drive to activate software. The special USB dongle contains only a unique serial number. In order to take advantage of the plug & play capabilities of the dongle, v3.40 of FactoryTalk Activation Manager is required.

Do I need a server level operating system to run the FactoryTalk Activation Manager Software?

The application can be hosted on practically any computer running a Microsoft operating system. Please check the FactoryTalk Activation Manager Help for supported operating systems

What is a floating concurrent activation?

A type of concurrent activation. Floating activations allow multiple computers across a network to use Rockwell Software products concurrently. An activation server manages a predetermined number of activations in a pool, and makes these activations available to any configured computer on the network.

When a computer connects to the network and runs a Rockwell Software product, it automatically "checks out" an activation from the pool of available concurrent activations. When the product shuts down, the activation is automatically freed and returns to the activation server's available pool. Checking out activations from the pool and returning them to the server happens automatically, without any user intervention.

What is a borrowed concurrent activation?

A type of concurrent activation. A borrowed activation is retrieved from a pool of available activations managed by an activation server. A borrowed activation expires after a specified amount of time (borrow term). A borrowed activation does not require a continuous network connection to the activation server. Once a borrowed activation is checked out to a particular computer, the computer can disconnect from the network. When the time limit of the borrowed activation expires, the software is no longer activated on the computer where the borrowed activation resides, and the activation automatically becomes available again from the server's activation pool.

Not all products support borrowed activation.

Does a borrowed activation have any dependency on a Host ID ?

Borrowed activations have dependencies on the hardware they are tied to (typically a MAC address of a Network Adapter) on the client computer. If that MAC Address is changed, corrupted, or disabled in the future, the next time the product is launched will result in a Grace Period message. Be sure that the hardware used when borrowing the activation is available in order to use the borrowed activation on a client computer. Think of it as the borrowed activation's Host ID.

What should I be aware of when using a multihomed host machine and borrowing an activation ?

Multihomed computers typically connect to two or more network addresses. Typically users want to disable hardware tied to network addresses. Be sure that the hardware used when borrowing the activation is available in order to use the borrowed activation on a multihomed computer.

Can a borrowed activation be manually expired from the Activation Server?

No, borrowed activations can't be manually "expired" if a computer is stolen or not working. The user must wait for the borrow time term to expire before the activation is returned to the pool of activations on the Activation server.

What is an End Users Options File?

An optional plain-text file that contains options that affect how an activation server manages concurrent activations. The options file is called flexsvr.opt, and is located in the default activations folder.

Are there any restrictions on when a borrowed concurrent activation can be returned?

A borrowed activation can be returned by a computer to the activation server as long as it is connected to the server when the activation is being returned.

What is Grace Period for a product?

If a software application is launched and activation can't be located, this period allows the software to run normally for up to 7 days. This gives the user time to resolve the activation failure and not disrupt an existing running system.

Did Grace Period exist in EVRSI?

No, Grace Period only works with FactoryTalk Activations

Can a product support FactoryTalk Activations and NOT support Grace Period ?

Yes, RSLogix5000 is one product that began to support FactoryTalk Activations as early as V10.04, however only adopted the 7 day Grace Period feature in V16.03.

How often will the software re-check for valid activation while in Grace Period?

The software will re-check every 4 hours and notify the user. The user cannot configure the re-check time.

Once in the Grace Period, when does the software reactivate?

Once activation is found during the re-check process, the software will start and run normally and re-checking will stop. The Grace Period clock is reset and made available once again if an activation failure results in the future.

Will the live production application cease to operate if Grace Period expires and then something happens to the activation file (corruption)?

No, even if activation isn't found in 7 days, the application will continue to run until a power cycle or reboot is made to the computer and the software is relaunched.

What is gained from products that have a DEMO mode incorporated?

When Grace Period has expired, Rockwell Software products that do not provide a demo mode will not be able to restart at the end of the 7-day grace period. However, Rockwell Software products that incorporate a demo mode will launch in demo mode after the 7-day Grace Period has expired and the product is restarted.

Functional Questions

How has activation delivery changed ?

3.5" master diskettes are no longer shipped. Rockwell Automation delivers activations electronically using the Internet. If an Internet connection is not available anywhere at your site, Rockwell Automation can still deliver activation file information by email, telephone, fax, or standard mail.

What do I need to activate my software electronically?

1. Activation Certificate

- *This document is enclosed in a red envelope with the software CD.*
- *It contains the Serial Number and Product Key of your software product, as well as the Activation Type you have purchased.*

2. FactoryTalk Activation Manager software

- *Included on your software product CD.*
- *Can be downloaded from: <http://licensing.software.rockwell.com>*

3. Determine how you want to get activations for your Rockwell Software Products

- *I have internet access from this computer*
- *I have internet access from another computer at this site*
- *I don't have internet access at this site*

Is an Internet connection required to start products?

No. Internet connection is only required when you are creating an activation file. Once product activations have been retrieved (either via Web, email, fax or phone), FactoryTalk Activation does not use an Internet connection.

What is rehosting ?

Rehosting an activation is a means of associating an activation file with a different Host ID. Rehosting an activation file deactivates and deletes the activation file on the computer that is hosting it, and creates a rehost code that can be used to generate a new activation file for use on another computer.

When should rehosting be considered ?

- *for unexpected or infrequent events*
- *computer upgrades*
- *computer failures*

Commercial Questions

How do I purchase dongles?

Dongles are purchased separately from software products. A single dongle can be used as the Host ID for all software products installed on a single computer or activation server. The catalog number(s) for a USB dongle are (9509-USBDONG = legacy dongle – no storage capacity) or (9509-USBDONG2 = “plug & play” dongle – 2GB storage capacity). A standard USB drive cannot be used. The special USB dongle contains only a unique serial number. In order to take advantage of the plug & play capabilities of the dongle, v3.40 of FactoryTalk Activation Manager is required.

Can I still purchase the old dongle (9509-USB-DONG) ?

No, this dongle has been obsoleted and is no longer available for order.

Which products support FactoryTalk Activation and Grace Period?

All products will support FactoryTalk Activation as of the CPR 9 system release. To know which type of activation to use, customers must check the Activation Certificate document enclosed with their software CDs. The Rockwell Software Pricing Spreadsheet will also contain a more detailed table showing which products support which activation method and when.

In what release was Grace Period introduced?

CPR9

Will I lose any functionality with software when Grace Period is initiated?

All Rockwell Software products entering Grace Period shall default to at least the functionality that was purchased for that product and will not have reduced functionality during the grace period.

What version of FactoryTalk Activation Manager is required to use the “plug & play” dongle (9509-USB-DONG2) ?

FactoryTalk Activation Manager (v 3.40 or higher)

Technical Questions

When does the FactoryTalk Activation Manager look for activations?

The FactoryTalk Activation Manager will only look for activation when the software application is launched.

Where can I download the latest version of the FactoryTalk Activation Manager software?

<http://www.rockwellautomation.com/>

How does FactoryTalk Activation work with terminal services?

FactoryTalk Activation node-locked activations cannot be used in a terminal services session, whether those node-locked activations are installed on the local or remote computer. Rockwell Automation does not endorse or support any terminal services display solutions of this type.

Concurrent activations may be used by remote computers during a terminal services session when those computers can make a TCP/IP connection to a FactoryTalk Activation Server. Configure the remote computer's client activation path (via the FactoryTalk activation tool) to point to the appropriate server name.

Will FactoryTalk Activation work on redundant servers?

Yes, FactoryTalk Activation has been tested on redundant servers. It is recommended that you co-locate the activation server on the same machine as the HMI server and use a USB dongle as the Host ID. This minimizes configuration and checkout times and eliminates two elements of failure (a second server computer and the network). While it's true that co-locating means that if one fails, they both fail, the server can be replaced quickly by swapping the dongle and activation files to a new computer.

Will FactoryTalk Activation work in virtual environments?

We recommend using concurrent activations. The big advantage to virtual environments is when emulating a large-scale environment using a finite number of physical machines. The FactoryTalk Activation Manager software must be installed on the host machine. In addition, the FactoryTalk Activation Manager must be installed on each virtual image. A benefit of this setup is the only configuration on the virtual images is to configure them correctly to access activations from the host machine.

Will FactoryTalk Activation work with remote desktop or terminal services?

Node-locked activation will not work when connecting to another machine via a remote desktop connection or via a machine with terminal services running.

Concurrent activations can be used on machines that are being accessed remotely. Use the FactoryTalk Activation Tool to configure the client to check for activations on a server (either running locally or on the network). Any Rockwell Software product can be activated as long as the server has activations available for that product. For users connecting to a terminal server, a concurrent activation must be available for each user even if all of the users are logged in using the same account name. For example, if five users all log in to the same terminal server as administrator and all five wish to use RSLogix 5, the FactoryTalk Activation server needs to have at least five concurrent activations for RSLogix 5 available.

Where can I call for technical support?

Please call 440-646-3434 in North America. See <http://support.rockwellautomation.com/> for online support or for phone support in your area.

Do I need a TechConnect contract to get help for an activation problem?

No.

www.rockwellautomation.com

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