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COMPARE & CONTRAST of the different iterations of Windows Server

Depending on where you research, there appear to be different variations in how the servers are listed and grouped. I've organized what I believe are the most notable upgrades.

Versions of Microsoft Windows Servers. Versions of Microsoft Windows servers - J.D. Fox Micro. (n.d.). https://www.jdfoxmicro.com/resource-center/articles/versions-of-windows-server/

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2024

Current iteration and is the Long-Term Servicing Channel with support running through 2029 and extended support till 2034

1993

Beginning of Windows Server as it introduced the 32-bit Windows NT Kernal. Created to compete with Novell NetWare, which was the popular Server at the time.

1994

Upgraded version of the first iteration, improving on early problems and patching known vulnerabilities while adding features. Introduced SQL Server and Microsoft Mail (Precursor to present day Microsoft Exchange. Added compability with UNIX and Novell Netware for easier enterprise incorporation

2022

Supports Azure edition for hybrid clouds. Brought about secured-core server, stronger SMB encryption/compression, better windows container support.

Similiarities

All versions or iterations are based on Windows NT kernal architecture, which is the foundation for core componenets like memory management, NTFS and user accounts.

Since 2008, the operating system has allowed to install permissions for roles and responsibiities based on need to know or need.

Since 2000, active directory support has become a staple. Important in enterprise management.

GUI environment for easier management

Each version builds upon the previous iteration, usually improving features such as security, user management, speed and encryption.

All include NTFS file permissions, firewalls, policies for group and User account control.

1996

Introduced WIndows 95 user interface to the server. Included a web server called IIS (Internet Information Services), Transaction Server and Message Queuing.

2019

New improvements to security posture, as well as improvements to already existing features. Enhanced container support, added WSL (Windows Subsystem for Linux), Kubernates support, Storage Migration System, Open SSH etc.

2000

Major upgrade, as they introduced the hierarchical network management and security system known as active directory. Still popular to this day. Greater ability to configure network on Windows Workstation from Servers. Introduced different tiers of editions called Advanced and Datacenter Server for varying levels of support and compatability.

2017 & 2018

First subscription edition of Windows Server. Intended for customers bulding a software intended datacenter, hybrid cloud container-driven development environments.

2003

Improved Security capabilities, and active directory. Similar Interface to Windows XP, while having improvements over application compabilities as well as support for different x64 and IA-64 architectures.

2016

Improvements to virtually all things related to virtualization. Support for VXLAN, storage replication and Docker engine support. RAM and processor capacity support was vastly increased. New NANO installation mode further improving the size and footprint.

2012

Introduction of a multitude of enhancements like failover clustering, management of virtual servers and security and efficiency posture of communications on the network. Known as the "cloud optimized" due to the improvements on virtual servers. Brought about improvements to data storage performance as well as support for mobile devices.

2008

Equivalent to Windows Vista, including the Vista security functions as well as a improved architecture for managing and configuring Windows desktop. Major improvement in supporting virtual servers and clustering. Introduction of Hyper-V (competition to VMware vSphere. Better performance and security overall.