



Shareware: How trial software licensing works and what to check

What it is Shareware is software distributed so people can evaluate it before purchasing or registering a license. The trial may expire after a set period, limit features, add reminders, or restrict commercial use. The author retains...

PUBLISHER

Gridinsoft Support

UPDATED

Jul 17, 2026

READ TIME

1 min

What it is

Shareware is software distributed so people can evaluate it before purchasing or registering a license. The trial may expire after a set period, limit features, add reminders, or restrict commercial use. The author retains copyright and defines the permitted use in the license agreement.

Common models

A time-limited trial works fully for a fixed period, while feature-limited software unlocks tools after purchase. Nagware displays purchase reminders, and some shareware uses a usage or output limit. Shareware differs from freeware, which is offered without a required purchase, and from open-source software, which grants rights through its source license.

What to check

- A free trial does not mean the program may be copied, modified, or used commercially without restriction.
- Automatic renewal and data collection should be disclosed in the license and purchase flow.
- Third-party download sites may repackage legitimate shareware with adware or unwanted offers.

Safe use

- Download from the publisher and verify the digital signature when one is provided.
- Read trial limits, renewal terms, refund rules, and system requirements before installing.
- Decline unrelated bundled offers and remove software you no longer evaluate.
- Do not use cracks or key generators; they violate licensing and commonly deliver malware.

NEED MORE HELP?

We are here when the guide is not enough.

Visit the Gridinsoft Support Center for current product guidance or submit a support request with the details of your case.

[Open this guide online at support.gridinsoft.com](https://support.gridinsoft.com)