



NERDIO CON'26

IT LEADERS STRIKE BACK



Crafting the perfect desktop end-user experience, 2026 edition

Aaron Parker and Mehdi Sebbane

Agenda

1. Setting the scene
2. Performance impacts
3. User experience
4. Optimizing Windows
5. Take aways



Aaron Parker

Senior PM Architect



Mehdi Sebbane

Senior Technical Trainer

RAM prices have increased 300 to 500 percent since mid-2025, with analysts projecting no meaningful relief until late 2027.

Why UX breaks down

- Unoptimized Windows = inconsistency across devices.
- Poor configs, multiple agents & helper apps slow startup & increase errors.
- Every slowdown reduces productivity and increases support demand.
- Users lose confidence when basic workflows feel unpredictable or slow.

Costs of poor optimization

- Longer on-boarding
- Higher support tickets
- Reduced employee satisfaction
- Reduced trust in IT
- Every minute lost during sign-in, app launch, or network lag scales across the organization

Optimizing Windows at the image, policy, and app layers is one of the most effective ways to lift user satisfaction and productivity at enterprise scale.

Performance results

What happens on an unoptimized system?

With thanks to LTT: <https://youtube/QKpvYbCSWT8>

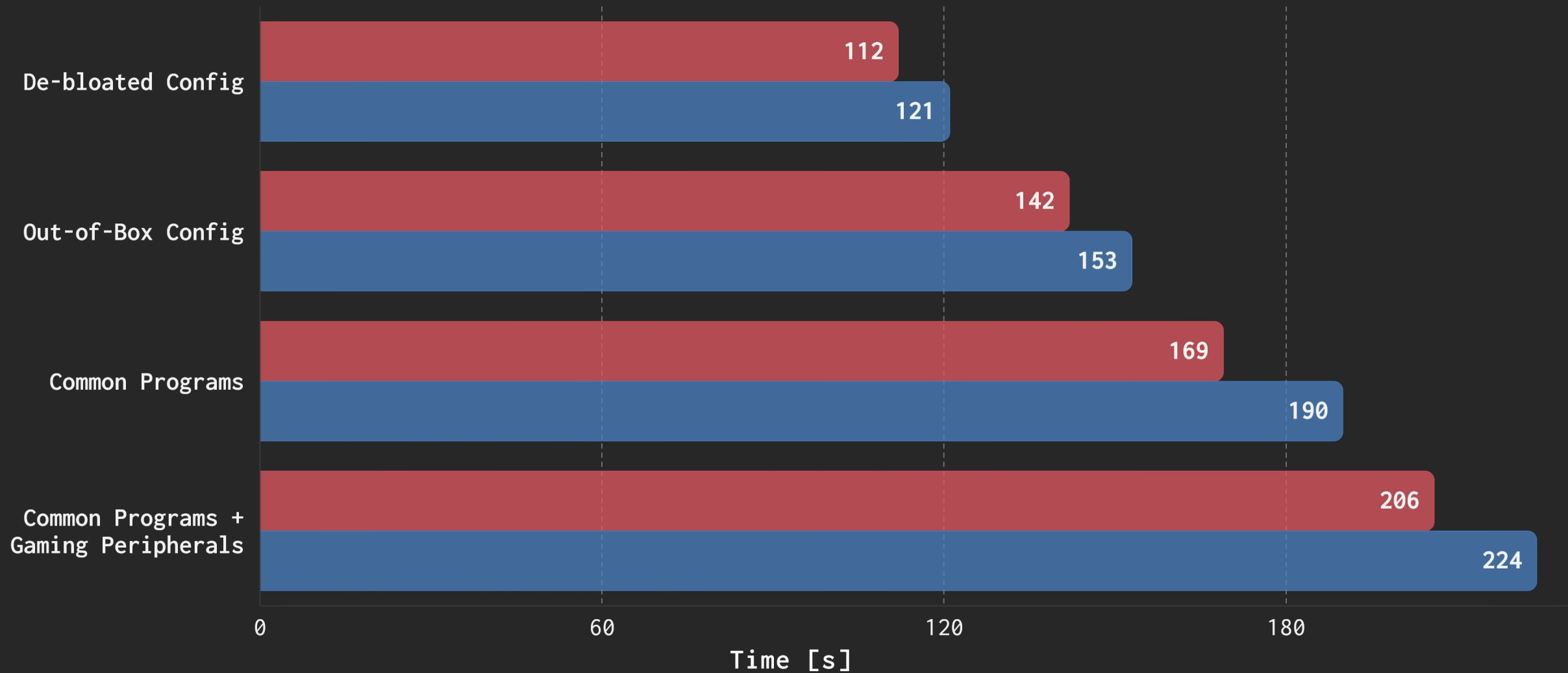
NERDIO
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STARTUP TIMER 1.3

AVERAGE STARTUP TIME | 5 RUN AVERAGE
LOWER IS BETTER

LEGEND

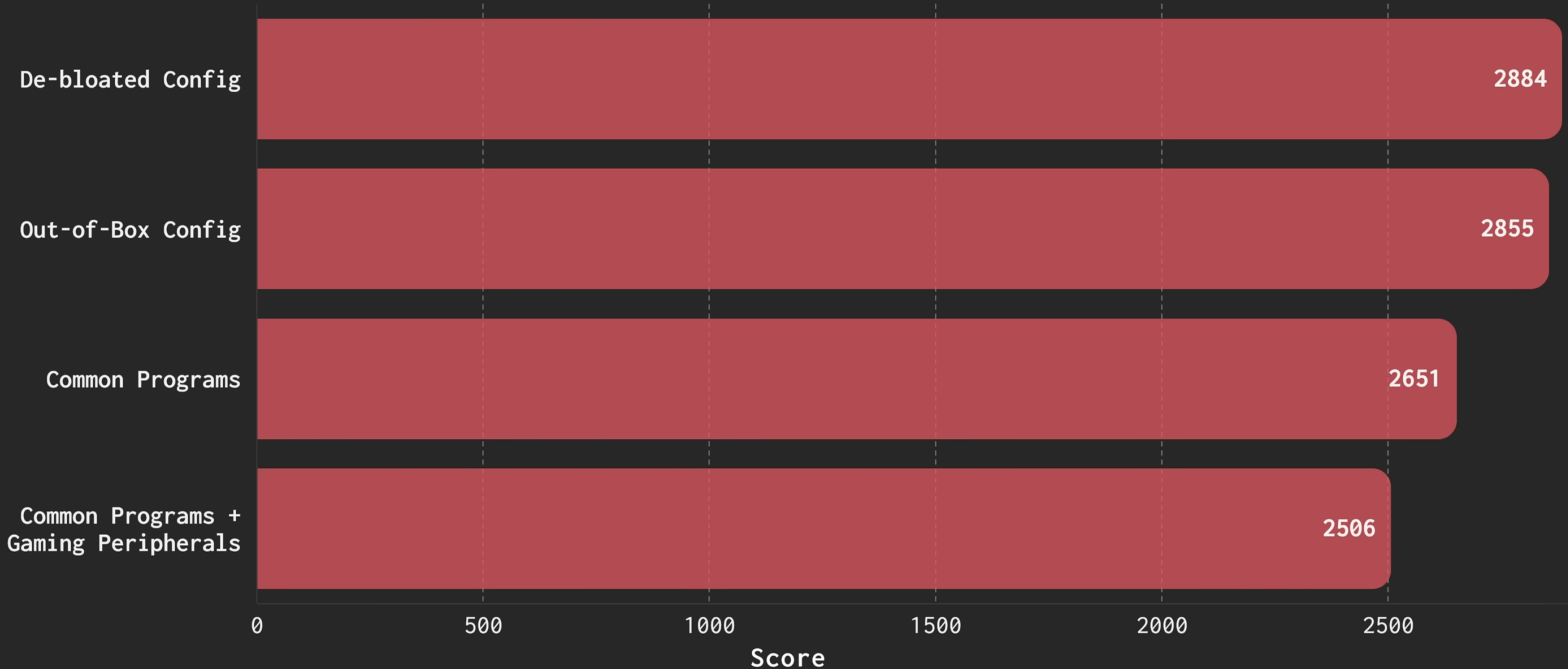
- Time To Desktop
- System Fully Started



PCMARK 10 2.1.2574 STORAGE TEST

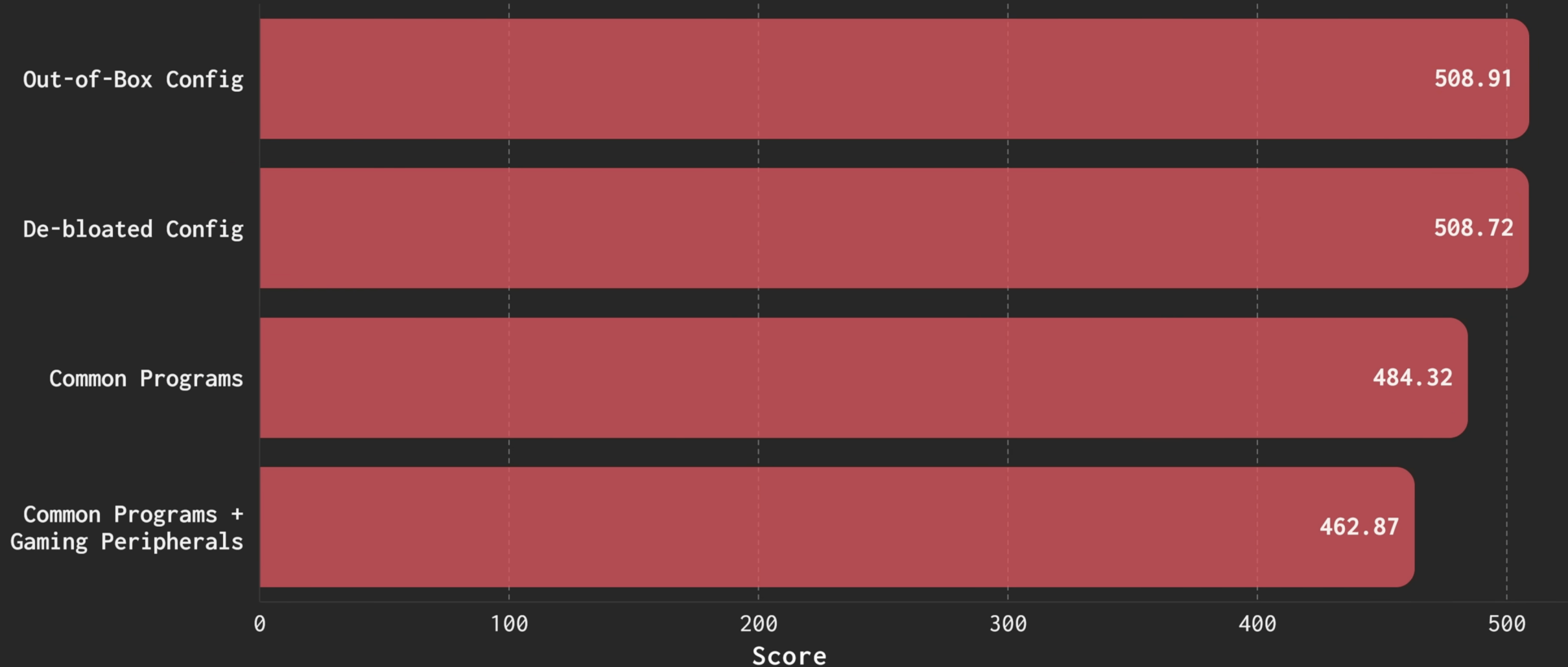
FULL SYSTEM DRIVE BENCHMARK 1.0.286

HIGHER IS BETTER



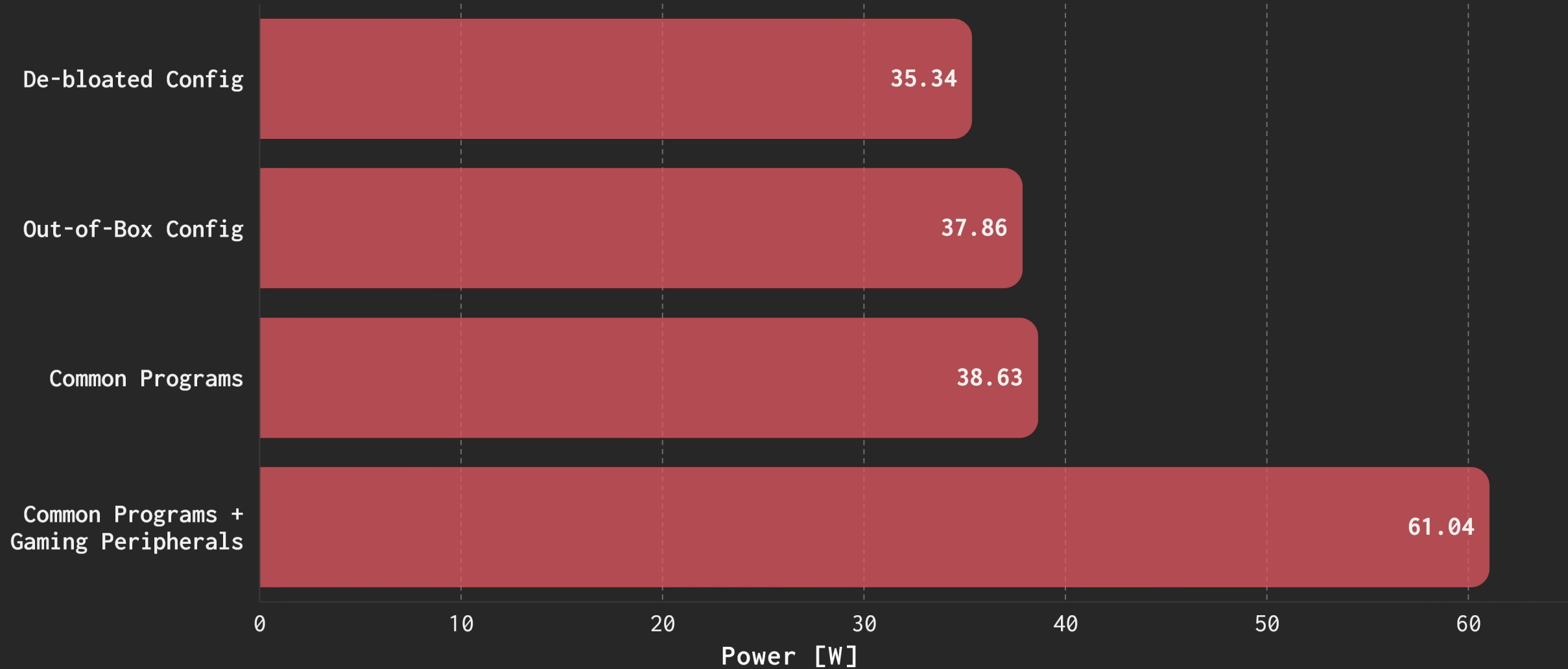
JETSTREAM 2.2

JAVASCRIPT + WEBASSEMBLY SUITE | CHROME 144.0.7559.59 | 2160p | 100% SCALING
HIGHER IS BETTER



SYSTEM IDLE POWER USAGE

AVERAGE SYSTEM POWER DRAW | QUARCH POWER ANALYSIS MODULE
LOWER IS BETTER



Poor UX

903 HP

YouTube

900hp Porsche Turbo S DRAG RACE

Hi Aaron,

Welcome to best-perform Windows

Search for apps, settings, and documents

Pinned All apps >

- Edge
- Outlook (new)
- Microsoft Store
- Settings
- Xbox
- Paint
- Microsoft Clipchamp
- LinkedIn
- Notepad
- Snipping Tool
- File Explorer

Recommended

- Get Started Welcome to Windows

Aaron Parker

Games

Explore more games

Melbourne

19°C

Tomorrow's low may tie the record > 20 Feb.

Day	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
High	20°	32°	37°	29°
Low	10°	21°	24°	13°

See full forecast

Markets

ASX 200	XJO	-0.64%	8,426.40
XAO Index	XAO	-0.56%	8,708.00
AUD/USD	Australian Dollar/United States D...	+0.03%	0.6352
Gold	Gold	+0.25%	2,956.40

Microsoft OneDrive

Set up OneDrive

Put your files in OneDrive to get them from any device.

Email address

Create account | Sign in

Time & language > Language & region

Language



Windows display language

Windows features like Settings and File Explorer will appear in this language

English (United States) ▾

Preferred languages

Microsoft Store apps will appear in the first supported language in this list

Add a language



English (Australia)



English (United States)

language pack, text-to-speech, speech recognition, handwriting, basic typing



Region



Country or region

Windows and apps might use your country or region to give you local content

Australia ▾



Regional format

Windows and some apps format dates and times based on your regional format

Recommended ▾ ▾



Recycle Bin




Microsoft Edge



Learn about this picture

✕



Email address

aparker@nerdio365.onmicrosoft.com

Advanced options ▾

Connect

No account? [Create an Outlook.com email address to get started.](#)

- Applications
- Recycle Bin
- Google Chrome
- Microsoft Edge
- citrix
- Zoom Workplace
- Adobe Acrobat

Search for apps, settings, and documents

Pinned All >

- Microsoft Edge
- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- Outlook
- Microsoft 365 Copilot
- Microsoft Store
- Photos
- Settings
- Calculator
- Clock
- Notepad
- Paint
- Snipping Tool
- OneNote
- File Explorer
- Microsoft Teams

Recommended More >

- Adobe Acrobat Recently added
- Microsoft Word Recently added
- Microsoft Excel Recently added
- Microsoft PowerPoint Recently added
- Microsoft Word Recently added
- Microsoft Word Recently added

Windows logo Search Taskbar icons System tray

Great UX



Recycle Bin

Search for apps, settings, and documents

Pinned

All >



Settings



Notepad



Calculator



Clock



Photos



File Explorer



Microsoft Edge



Word



Excel



PowerPoint



Company Portal



Outlook

Recommended

More >



Files
Recently added



People
Recently added



Calendar
Recently added



Document
1 Mar



Resume
Dec 2025



Metro report
Dec 2025



Ted Danson



Keyboard layout + Spacebar

- ENG English (Australia)
US
- ENG English (United States)
US

More keyboard settings



Search



ENG
US



3:54 PM
27/04/2026



Recycle Bin

New tab

Search or enter web address

Microsoft 365 Import favourites The Guardian

OneDrive - stealthpuppy

Ted - stealthpuppy

Home Gallery OneDrive - stealthpuppy Desktop Downloads Documents Pictures Music Videos This PC Network

Name

- Apps
- Attachments
- Desktop
- Documents
- Meetings
- Microsoft Copilot Chat Files
- Pictures
- Recordings
- stealthpuppylab - Wallpaper
- Videos
- Whiteboards
- Document.docx
- Ted @ stealthpuppy

13 items

Search for apps, settings, and documents

Pinned

- Settings
- Notepad
- Calculator
- Clock
- Photos
- File Explorer
- Microsoft Edge
- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- Company Portal
- Outlook

Recommended

- Files Recently added
- Calendar Recently added
- Resume Dec 2025
- People Recently added
- Document 1 Mar
- Metro report Dec 2025

Ted Danson

19°C

My Apps My Account Add shortcut

Recent SharePoint sites

- stealthpuppylab
- Communication site



Recycle Bin

Ted - stealthpuppy

Home > Ted - stealthpuppy

New | Cut | Copy | Paste | Sort | View

Name	Status
Apps	☁
Attachments	☁
Desktop	☁
Documents	☁
Meetings	☁ 🔍
Microsoft Copilot Chat Files	☁
Pictures	☁
Recordings	☁ 🔍
stealthpuppylab - Wallpaper	☁ 🔄
Videos	☁
Whiteboards	☁
Document.docx	☁
Ted @ stealthpuppy	✅

13 items

New tab

Microsoft 365 | Import favourites | The Guardian

18°C

Search the web

Microsoft 365 | My Apps | My Account | Add shortcut

msn Work

M365 Recently Used Documents

- Document
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
- Resume
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
- Metro report
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
- Bring Your Presentations
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
- Presentation
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson

Recent SharePoint sites

- stealthpuppylab
- Communication site

Upcoming events

No events scheduled today!
See upcoming events in Outlook




Search



ENG US




4:19 PM 27/04/2026

 **Ted Danson**
ted@cloud.stealthpuppy.com

- Home
- System
- Bluetooth & devices
- Network & internet
- Personalization
- Apps
- Accounts
- Time & language**
- Accessibility
- Privacy & security
- Windows Update

Time & language > Language & region

Language

 **Windows display language**
Windows features like Settings and File Explorer will appear in this language

English (Australia) ▾


Preferred languages
Microsoft Store apps will appear in the first supported language in this list

[Add a language](#)


⋮ **English (Australia)**
language pack

⋮

Region

 **Country or region**
Windows and apps might use your country or region to give you local content

Australia ▾


 **Regional format**
Windows and some apps format numbers, currency, date and time based on your regional format

Recommended ▾ ▾


 **Device setup region**
Country or region selected during device setup

Australia

Additional settings


 **Copy current user settings to welcome screen and system accounts**
This includes display language, input language, format and location

[Copy](#)

 **Copy current user settings to new user accounts**
This includes display language, input language, format and location

[Copy](#)

Related settings

 **Date & time**



Search the web

Microsoft 365 My Apps My Account Add shortcut

Managed account

Work • Work
ted@cloud.stealthpuppy.com

- Passwords and autofill
- Profile settings
- Sync is on
- Set up a new profile >
- Browse as guest

msn Work

M365 Recently Used Documents

- Document
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
You edited this
- Resume
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
You edited this
- Metro report
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
You edited this
- Bring Your Presentations
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson
You recently opened this
- Presentation
OneDriveForBusiness » Ted Danson

Recent SharePoint sites

- stealthpuppylab
- Communication site

Upcoming events

No events scheduled today!
[See upcoming events in Outlook](#)



AutoSave Off Document1 - Word Public*

File **Home** Insert Draw Design Layout References Mailings Review View Help

Clipboard Paste Font Paragraph Styles Editing Voice Sensitivity Editor Add-ins

Clipboard Font Paragraph Styles Editing Voice Sensitivity Editor Add-ins

Language ? X

Change proofing language for:

Selected text Current Document

Mark selected text as:

- English (Australia)
- English (United States)
- Afrikaans
- Albanian
- Alsatian (France)
- Amharic
- Arabic (Algeria)
- Arabic (Bahrain)

The speller and other proofing tools automatically use dictionaries of the selected language, if available.

Do not check spelling or grammar

Detect language automatically

Set As Default OK Cancel

Optimizing Windows

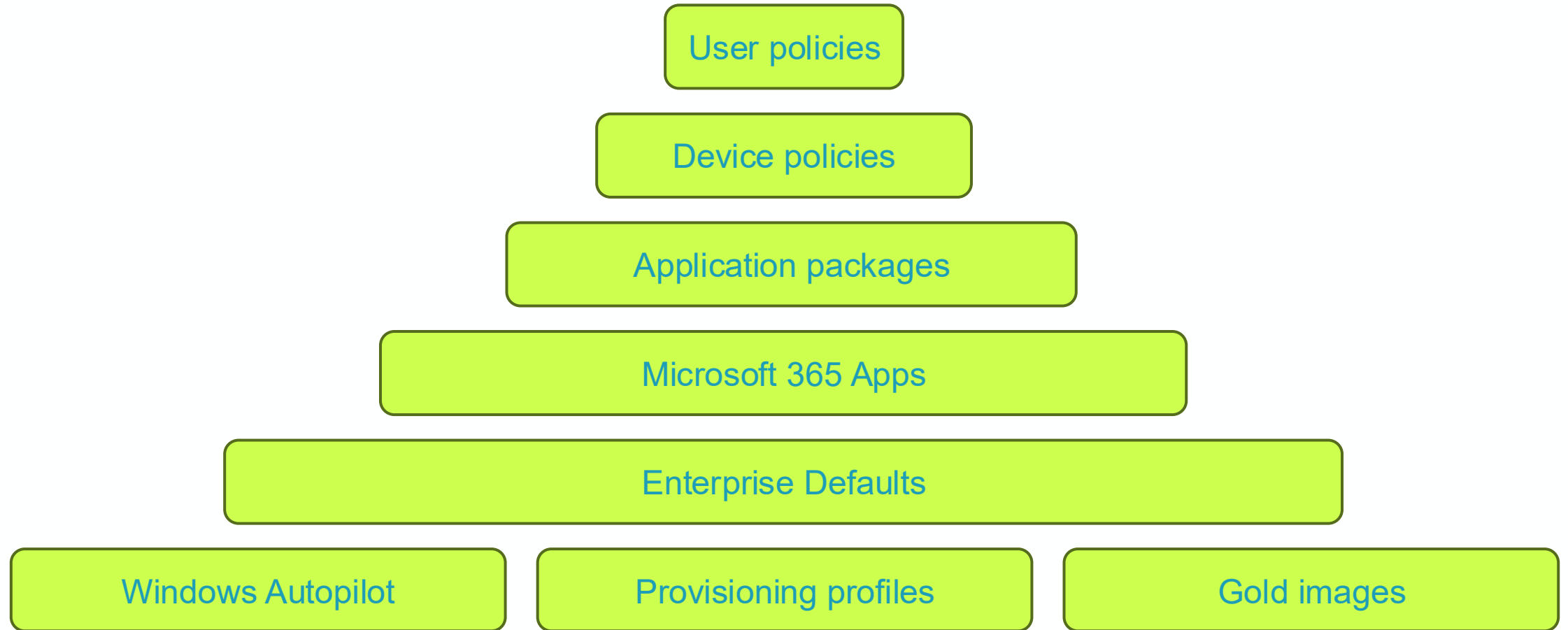
A well-tuned Windows image becomes the foundation for reliable, efficient, and scalable end-user computing

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CON'26**

Policies vs. preferences

	Policy	Preferences
Built-in apps	Target & remove with Intune	Remove in gold image/Autopilot
First run popups	Intune policies	Gold image/Autopilot
Start menu	Forced Start menu via Intune	Gold image/Autopilot
Wallpaper, settings, etc.	Force via Intune policies	Gold image/Autopilot

Building blocks



Windows Enterprise Defaults

https://stealthpuppy.com/defaults/

Windows Enterprise Defaults

Search


Home About Getting started Change log

Windows Enterprise Defaults.

Make Windows enterprise-ready.


Improve end-user experience with enterprise-ready, streamlined Windows PCs and images.

What is it? Results Getting started GitHub




Gold images

Optimise images from the stock Microsoft Windows ISO or public cloud with enterprise-ready defaults.




Windows Autopilot

Optimise Windows during Autopilot (or any OSD tool) to make all PCs enterprise-ready.



Default user profile

Configure the default user profile (incl. the Start menu) to improve the first sign-in user experience.



Language packs

Install language packs and configure Windows locale settings to support user's native regions.

```
PS C:\Temp\defaults> .\Install-Defaults.ps1
```



Search



2:09 PM
5/4/2026



26

Edit Windows Enterprise Defaults

- General
- Detect
- Install**
- Uninstall
- Versions

Configure custom script to install the application.

```
1 # Configure the environment
2 $ErrorActionPreference = [System.Management.Automation.ActionPreference]::Stop
3 $InformationPreference = [System.Management.Automation.ActionPreference]::Continue
4 $ProgressPreference = [System.Management.Automation.ActionPreference]::SilentlyContinue
5 [System.Net.ServicePointManager]::SecurityProtocol = [System.Net.ServicePointManager]
  ::SecurityProtocol -bor 3072
6
7 # Unzip and run all Install-Defaults.ps1 scripts
8 Expand-Archive -Path $Context.GetAttachedBinary() -DestinationPath $PWD -Force
9 Get-ChildItem -Path $PWD -Include "Install-Defaults.ps1" -Recurse -File |
  ForEach-Object {
10     $Context.Log("Executing: $($_.FullName)")
11     & $_.FullName
12 }
13 $Context.Log("Install complete")
14
```

Script status: **healthy** ▼
Applied to 3 versions ▼
Snippets ▼

Close Reset Update

Edit Scripted Action

Name:

Description:

Tags: Evergreen x Customisation x Language x Image x

Script Execution Mode:

Script Execution Environment:

ENABLE CLOUD PC

▼ **SCRIPT**

```

1 <#
2   .SYNOPSIS
3   Installs Windows Enterprise Defaults to customize the image and the default profile.
4
5   .DESCRIPTION
6   This script installs Windows Enterprise Defaults to customize the image and the default profile.
7   It retrieves the necessary variables from Nerdio Manager or uses default values if no variables are provided. The script then
8   downloads and extracts the installer,
9   and runs the Install-Defaults.ps1 script with the specified language, time zone, and Appx mode.
10
11  .PARAMETER Path
12  The path where the Windows Enterprise Defaults will be installed.
13
14  .EXAMPLE
15  .\015_Customise.ps1 -Path "C:\Apps\defaults"
16  #>
17  #description: Installs Windows Enterprise Defaults to customise the image and the default profile https://stealthpuppy.com/
18  #description/defaults/
19  #execution mode: Combined
20  #tags: Evergreen, Customisation, Language, Image
21  #Requires -Modules Evergreen
    
```

Applied to

Host Pools: 0
 Session hosts: 0
 Desktop images: 0
 Auto-scale profiles: 0
 Host pool profiles: 0
 Groups: 0

Host Pools: 0
 Session hosts: 0
 Desktop images: 0
 Auto-scale profiles: 0
 Host pool profiles: 0
 Groups: 0

Windows Enterprise Defaults 2510.27.242 en-AU | Properties

Client Apps

Search

Overview

Manage

Properties

Monitor

Device install status

User install status

Relationship viewer

App information [Edit](#)

Name

Windows Enterprise Defaults 2510.27.242 en-AU

Description

Customisations to **make Windows 10 & Windows 11 enterprise-ready** by configuring a clean OS default state, uninstalling unnecessary in-box AppX apps, and improving the end-user experience by updating the default user profile and default Start menu. Includes support for localising Windows and setting a time zone.

Publisher

stealthpuppy

App Version

2510.27.242

Category

Computer management

Show this as a featured app

No

Information URL

<https://stealthpuppy.com/defaults/>

Privacy URL

<https://stealthpuppy.com/defaults/>

Developer

stealthpuppy

Owner

No Owner

Notes

{"CreatedBy":"PSPackageFactory","Guid":"8fddd581-f505-4760-9bb3-2365db204b38","Date":"2024-06-01"}

Logo



Program [Edit](#)

Install command

C:\Windows\System32\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\powershell.exe - ExecutionPolicy RemoteSigned -File .\Install-enAU.ps1

Install script

-

Uninstall command

C:\Windows\System32\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\powershell.exe - ExecutionPolicy RemoteSigned -File .\Remove-Defaults.ps1

Edit Microsoft 365 Apps for Enterprise, Visio, Project: Vdi, X64



General
Detect
Install
Uninstall
Versions

Configure custom script to install the application.

```
1 # Unzip the attached binary to the current directory
2 Expand-Archive -Path $Context.GetAttachedBinary() -DestinationPath $PWD -Force
3
4 $SetupFile = Get-ChildItem -Path $PWD -Recurse -Include "setup.exe"
5 $ConfigurationFile = Get-ChildItem -Path $PWD -Recurse -Include
  "Install-Microsoft365Apps.xml"
6 $Context.Log("Installing Microsoft 365 Apps from: $($ConfigurationFile.FullName)")
7 $params = @{
8     FilePath      = $SetupFile.FullName
9     ArgumentList  = "/configure `"$($ConfigurationFile.FullName)`""
10    Wait           = $true
11    NoNewWindow   = $true
12    PassThru      = $true
13    ErrorAction   = "Stop"
14 }
15 $result = Start-Process @params
16 $Context.Log("Install complete. Return code: $($result.ExitCode)")
17
```

Script status: **healthy** ▼

Applied to 1 version ▼

Snippets ▼

Close

Reset

Update



Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise, Visio, Project, Outlook (new): Desktop, Current, x64 | Properties

Client Apps

Search

Overview

Manage

Properties

Monitor

Device install status

User install status

Relationship viewer

App information [Edit](#)

Name Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise, Visio, Project, Outlook (new): Desktop, Current, x64

Description Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook (new), OneNote, OneDrive, Teams, Visio and Project.
Uses setup.exe **16.0.18827.20140**. Built from configuration file: O365ProPlusOutlookVisioProProjectPro.xml: Includes: O365ProPlusRetail...

Publisher Microsoft

App Version 16.0.18827.20140

Category Productivity

Show this as a featured app No

Information URL <https://www.microsoft365.com/>

Privacy URL <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-US/privacystatement>



Developer Microsoft

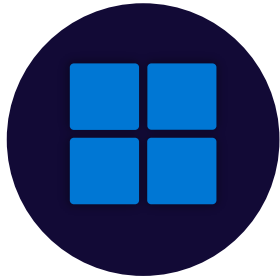
Owner No Owner

Notes {"CreatedBy":"PSPackageFactory","Guid":"cb61f7bd-1657-4df8-94e6-e9b23f369167","Date":"2025-10-15"}

Logo



Policy name  	Policy type	Scope tags
Prod-Windows-CredentialGuard-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-DeliveryOptimization-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-DeviceLockSignIn-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-GoogleChrome-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-GoogleChrome-Extensions-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-Microsoft365Apps-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-Microsoft365Apps-Baseline-User	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-MicrosoftDefenderExclusions-Baseline-Device	Microsoft Defender Antivirus exclusions	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-MicrosoftDefenderUpdateControls-Device	Defender Update controls	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-MicrosoftEdge-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-MicrosoftEdge-Extensions-AVDW365-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-MicrosoftEdge-Extensions-Physical-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-MicrosoftEdge-ProgressiveWebApps-User	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-MicrosoftOneDrive-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-RemoteDesktop-AVDW365-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-SecurityExperience-Baseline-Device	Windows Security Experience	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-SmartScreenPhishingProtection-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-StorageSense-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod
Prod-Windows-WindowsFeatures-Baseline-Device	Settings catalog	Default Prod



Windows Autopilot

Device pre-provisioning

Enterprise defaults

M365 apps Win32 package

Intune configuration profiles

Sync via M365 apps, OneDrive, Edge



Autopilot device prep

Gold images

Enterprise defaults

M365 apps Win32 package

Intune configuration profiles

Sync via M365 apps, OneDrive, Edge



Marketplace image + customisations

Gold images

Enterprise defaults

M365 apps Win32 package

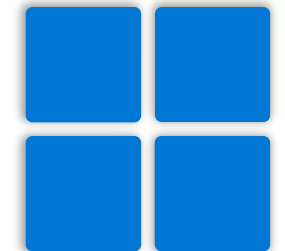
Intune configuration profiles

Sync via M365 apps, OneDrive, Edge

Review

Optimizing Windows

- ✓ Consistency across every device
- ✓ Faster time to productive use
- ✓ Lower support demand and fewer failures
- ✓ Improved performance everywhere
- ✓ Stronger user confidence and satisfaction



Tools

Enterprise
defaults



Scripted
actions



Microsoft
365 apps



Intune
policies





**Follow me
on LinkedIn**





**Follow me
on LinkedIn**



Thank you

Please remember to fill out the post-breakout survey in the app.