Installing GraphPad Prism for Many
A guide for IT staff
Last modified July 2023

Table of Contents

Overview

Installing Prism is quite simple, so there is no reason for most people to learn any details of how the installation works. This document is written for IT people who are responsible for installing Prism onto many computers under an annual group license. This is only applicable to annual group licenses and does not apply to any other type of license.

Installing Prism Mac is a bit different than installing Prism Windows. Most of this document assumes you are using Windows. If you are responsible for installing Prism Mac, see the separate section on [Installing Prism Mac](#).

This guide applies to Prism 10. Please contact us at [help.graphpad.com](#) if you have questions about older or newer major versions of Prism.

Finding the latest Prism version

Prior to starting the installation process for your users, we highly encourage you to verify that you have the latest installer. You can find this in My Account → Install, on our Updates page, or linked to below in this guide.

Using the latest version will help ensure that these installation instructions work as expected, and that your users receive the most recent improvements and bug fixes.

Managing your Prism subscription account for your group license

To manage your Prism subscription, login at:

https://www.graphpad.com/myaccount/

A username and initial password were provided to the license administrator when the subscription was set up. The username is the license administrator's email address. If additional people need access to the subscription, (for example, if the license administrator is out of the office) you can add them as alternate administrators. Log in to your Prism subscription account, click "Group Profile" and add them as an alternate administrator. Once you have added their email address, they can access the account by going to the login page at https://www.graphpad.com/myaccount/. They will enter their email as the username and then click "Set Password" to establish their password.

Once logged in, you may:
- View your serial number(s)
- Download the installers
- Learn how many times your license has been activated, and how many more activations are available
- Find out when your current annual term will expire
- See who has activated Prism
- Manage who is allowed to activate Prism (by email addresses)
- Manage alternate administrators
- Reset your GraphPad account password
- Renew your subscription

You can always contact us at help.graphpad.com if you need further assistance.

Two ways to manage activations

As noted above, your account page provides a record of Prism activations for your currently active subscription. There are two ways people can activate.

The standard method requires that each user activate manually. It takes just a minute. They enter their email address into a form, and receive back an activation code which they enter into Prism. You can

control who is allowed to activate this way via your "Manage Allowed Users" section of your account page.

The alternative method is to allow and configure for silent activation. This requires an XML configuration file and is discussed in detail further in this document. If you do this, anyone who has the xml configuration file installed with Prism will be able to activate (regardless of who has been "allowed" via their email address on your account page). With silent activation, the list of allowed email addresses is ignored, but the end-user will be prompted to add their email when they first launch the application; in order to assist with identifying activations in My Account.

What the Prism Windows installer does

Before trying to customize the process, you first need to know what the Prism installer does:
- Creates a program folder (and subfolders) and copies files into it.
- Creates a folder to hold the serial number file, and changes the permission for this folder so that "all users" have read/write access.
- Installs an indexing service that allows Microsoft Index to find Prism files when you search for any text within.
- Launches Prism.

It is not possible to install software without admin rights, so admin rights are needed to run the Prism installer. Either you must be logged in with admin rights, or you can right click on the installer file and choose Run as Administrator.

What Prism Windows does on first launch

The list above is short. Many of the steps that you'd expect an installer to do are actually performed by Prism itself when it is run the first time:

- It creates the registry entries that tie the Prism file extensions to the Prism application, and that allow Object Linking and Embedding (OLE) to work. Every time that Prism starts, it checks that these registry entries are correct.
- Prism asks the user to enter the serial number, name, email and institution on a web form which is submitted to graphpad.com. The user then receives an email with an activation code which needs to be pasted into a dialog box that Prism presents. This activation process links a particular serial number to a particular computer (identified by what we call a machineID). With a group license, you can configure silent activation, so this happens with no user interaction.
- Prism saves the serial number, machineID, and activation code into a license file. The name and location of this file depends on which version of Prism and which version of Windows you use:

> **Prism 10**: prism-license.qxt
>
> C:\ProgramData\GraphPad Software\Prism\

Activation does not require administrator rights.

Using the MSI installer

To facilitate deploying Prism to many computers, we have created an MSI installer you can use to deploy using Group Policy or other software management tools that support MSI files.

Prism 10 is only available as the 64-bit Prism version for 64-bit Windows.

You can download the MSI installer for your Prism subscription account at
https://www.graphpad.com/myaccount/

After you login, click "Install" and you will find the MSI installer under "Option C" at the bottom of the page.

Please ensure that the system you are using supports the 64-bit architecture before downloading the MSI installer.

The MSI installer supports the following switches to allow you to customize the installation:

    QUIET - standard MSI switch to perform installation without displaying a user interface
    STARTUPCONFIGPATH - path to xml configuration file to be copied to install dir
    UNINSTALLPRISM9 - uninstalls Prism 9, defaults to 0
    UNINSTALLPRISM8 - uninstalls Prism 8, defaults to 0
    UNINSTALLPRISM7 - uninstalls Prism 7, defaults to 0
    APPDIR - specify the installation directory
    STARTPRISM - launch Prism after installation, can be 1 or 0

A common scenario is when you want to: do a silent installation, install to the default Program Files directory and deploy XML configuration file for silent activation. You may use STARTUPCONFIGPATH to install the configuration file, but this file must be present on the client computer that the MSI installer is running on. You cannot designate a server name, IP address or mapped drive letter. Here is an example for that scenario:

```
msiexec.exe /QUIET /i "path\InstallPrism10.msi" STARTUPCONFIGPATH=c:\temp
```

If the folder name includes spaces, use quotation marks around the path:

```
msiexec.exe /QUIET /i "path\InstallPrism10.msi" STARTUPCONFIGPATH="c:\some temp folder"
```

If you want to install Prism into a custom directory, use APPDIR like:

```
msiexec.exe /QUIET /i "path\InstallPrism10.msi" APPDIR="C:\Prism\"
```

By default, the Prism 10 MSI installer will leave Prism 9 installed if they exist in a different directory. If you want to uninstall Prism 9, use UNINSTALLPRISM9=1, like:

```
msiexec.exe /QUIET /i "path\InstallPrism10.msi" UNINSTALLPRISM9=1
```

If you want Prism to launch after installation use STARTPRISM like

```
msiexec.exe /i "path\InstallPrism10.msi" STARTPRISM=1
```

Note that if you use /QUIET switch, STARTPRISM is ignored.

Prism Configuration File

To configure Prism to use optional settings which override the defaults, you can create a file prism-config.xml and place it in the Prism program folder. Use of this file is entirely optional. Note that this must be a plain text file, so saved with a text editor and not a word processor.

This file can contain:

- Default Prism serial number
- LabArchive's local server options
- Disable check for Prism updates (command line option **-U**)
- Path to the preferences file (command line option **-O**)
- Flag to use preferences file read-only (command line option **-C**)
- Use the custom resource module (command line option **–module**)
- Measure units (English or metric, currently read from **WIN.INI**)
- Use silent activation (see below)

For example, you could use this file to include a default serial number, so your users won't have to enter it. For this example the xml file would be something like this (obviously, you'd enter the appropriate serial number):

<?**xml** version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<**configuration**>
            <**serial-number**>GPS-1234567-EIPR-E8E0F</**serial-number**>
</**configuration**>

Some settings can be set in several places. The command line options have the highest priority, then settings in the xml config file, followed by settings saved in the preference file, or labarchivesConfig.txt).

Here is a second example:

<?**xml** version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<**configuration**>
      <**serial-number**>GPS-1234567-EIPR-E8E0F</**serial-number**>
      <**startup-log**>true</**startup-log**>
      <**labarchives**>
            <**try-account-blurb**>Trial accounts are disabled.</**try-account-blurb**>
            <**error-connecting**>You currently have no access to the labarchives server.
To set this up, contact John Smith, j.smith@biostatcom.org</**error-connecting**>

```
            </labarchives>
            <check-for-updates>false</check-for-updates>
</configuration>
```

Notes:
- The file must be plain text. Create it with a text editor or XML editor, not Word.
- The first line defines the file to be an XML file. Copy the line exactly as shown in the examples above.
- Blank line(s) in the file prior to the <?xml... line will confuse Prism.

Here is a full list of settings:

check-for-updates (boolean)

> Default value is true. If set to false, Prism will not check for updates on the GraphPad server. This would be useful if Prism's checking for updates triggers a firewall, or if you only want updates to be installed by the IT people. Keep in mind that with this set to false users can still update manually.
> Corresponding command line option: **-U**

labarchives group, login-url

> URL for the login server when using local LabArchives installation (rare)

labarchives group, api-url

> URL for LabArchives server when using local LabArchives installation (rare)

labarchives group, browse-url URL labarchives server documents Web page.

> This URL is opened on clicking "Browse" menu item in LA toolbar menu.

labarchives group, error-connecting (text)

> Alert text when no connection to labarchives server is established. Overrides the usual message. Useful if you want to include an IT contact in the message.

labarchives group, try-account-blurb (text)

> Short text, displayed in Try account of Login to labarchives dialog. Useful if you don't want people using a demo account, because they have access to an institutional account.

measure-units (text)

> Measure units to use in Prism. Could be **imperial** or **metric**.
> Default setting is imperial (inches).
> If not present, read from **WIN.INI** in Windows folder.

module-file (folder)

> (Folder) is the folder name inside the Prism/Module folder to custom resource DLL file to load (e.g. Japanese translation or custom equations library).
> Corresponding command line option **-module**

preferences-read-only (boolean)

> Do not overwrite preferences on exiting Prism. This lets everyone start with a standard set of preferences. This might be useful, for example, in a teaching lab.
> Corresponding command line option: **-C**

serial-number (text)

> Default serial number. If Prism is not activated, this serial number will be prefilled in the Activation dialog, step "Enter Serial Number".

silent-activation (boolean)

> If set to true, Prism will attempt to activate the license silently, without requiring that the user do anything. The default is to not activate silently. See below.

request-timeout (integer)

> Default value in milliseconds: 60000. Equivalent to 60 seconds. The timeout parameter applies to all Internet requests where Prism has to wait for a response, which includes manual activation, silent activation, phone home, web updates and LabArchives. We do not recommend increasing the default unless you are experiencing connection timeout issues.

Notes:
- All tags, except <configuration>, are optional.
- The order of the XML tags inside the <configuration> tag is not important.
- The XML tags are all lower case, and will not work if you capitalize any letters.
- Boolean values should be specified as either "true" or "false", without the quotation marks.
- Unknown tags (user-defined or from a future version) are ignored.
- The five settings for Lab Archives all must be within a <labarchives> tag. See the example above.
- If the XML file is invalid (missing closed tags, missing root element, invalid characters) and could not be parsed, Prism continues to launch using the default values but displays the alert: "Invalid prism-config.xml. The file was ignored."

Location of Prism Configuration File on Windows

Place prism-config.xml in the Prism program folder

Location of Prism Configuration File on macOS

You can place the prism-config.xml file in three locations. Prism will search these locations in this order until it finds the file:

(1) The same folder as .app, typically it is the "/Applications" folder, then
(2) User's Library folder: ~/Library/Application Support/GraphPad/Prism/, then
(3) System Library folder (for all users on a Mac): /Library/Application Support/GraphPad/Prism/

When Mac Prism finds the Prism Configuration File, it stops searching the other locations. For example, if Prism finds prism-config.xml in the user library it won't search the system library.

Silent activation

Prism can be configured to activate silently, so your users do not have to see the activation dialog, or answer any questions.

Note that silent *activation* is distinct from silent *installation*, explained above.

To configure Prism for silent activation, you must use an XML configuration file as explained above, and include the following lines:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<configuration>
        <silent-activation>true</silent-activation>
        <serial-number>GPS-000000-XXX-0000</serial-number>
</configuration>
```

Note: Do not copy/paste the sample XML from this PDF document as that can result in an invalid file. Please download this sample XML file and rename and edit as needed.

Obviously, the serial-number tag would contain your actual serial number, not the example one shown above.

When Prism is first launched, it will look at the XML configuration file. If configured for silent activation, Prism will send the GraphPad server the machineID, the name of the computer, the username of the computer account, Prism version, version of Windows or macOS, and operating system architecture (32 or 64-bit). Our server will also see the IP address. Prism also sends the serial number, which you have entered into the XML file. The server will return the activation code, which Prism saves. This should take just a second, and require no interaction from the user.

Possible error messages are:
- "Invalid serial number"
- "Invalid machineID"
- "No more activations allowed for this serial number"
- "Cannot connect to graphpad.com. There may be a problem with Internet connectivity, a firewall, or the GraphPad server." This message will also come up if your account is not configured (in GraphPad's server) to allow silent activation.

Obviously, Prism must be able to connect to the internet for silent activation to work. See the section on Network access.

Location of the license file

In Windows 7, 8, 10 and 11 the license file, prism-license.qxt, is stored in:

        C:\ProgramData\GraphPad Software\Prism\

In macOS, the license file is stored in:

        /Library/Application Support/GraphPad/Prism/

Installing Prism Mac

There is no installer for Prism Mac. When you open the .dmg (disk image) file we provide, you'll find a single Prism ".app" file. Drag this file to the Applications folder (or any folder) to install Prism. This file is actually a "package", which is essentially a folder that appears to be a file. Right (control) click on it to view the package contents.

When launched for the first time, Prism Mac runs through an activation process that is similar to the one for Prism Windows.

When macOS detects Prism, it sets up add-ins for Spotlight (to search for Prism files), Automator (to create some macros) and QuickLook (to preview graphs in Finder). MacOS also creates the link between file extensions and the Prism application, so that double-clicking on a .prism, .pzfx or .pzf file will launch Prism.

You can customize this installation using a configuration (XML) file, as described above. The XML file should be placed in the same folder as the Prism application, usually Applications.

Three of the settings don't apply to Prism Mac:
- Preferences-file. Preferences are always saved in standard system locations, and you cannot override this.
- Preferences-read-only. Whether preferences are writable is controlled by file access permissions, and you cannot change this in the configuration file.
- Module-file. This is a feature only for Prism Windows.

Note that Prism Mac provides nothing equivalent to command line switches, so those work on Windows only.

Silent activation works the same for Windows and Mac.

Network access

Prism communicates over the network in order to do silent activation and license validation. As Prism communicates over the standard HTTPS (port 443) protocol, extra network configuration is not typically required. Prism needs to access:

https://licenses.graphpad.com (7.00/7.0a and later)

Mac only: Note that silent activation and license validation will only work through a proxy that requires authentication when the credentials are specified in System Preferences.

Change Log

07/13/2023 - Updated for Prism 10.0.0
10/28/2020 - Updated for Prism 9.0.0: removal of information regarding 32-bit MSI installers

03/13/2020 - Correct location of prism-config.xml. Note to avoid using the SharedSupport folder
03/26/2019 - Updated for Prism 8.1: alternate locations for Prism configuration file
11/26/2018 - Updated for Prism 8.0.1: introduced <request-timeout> prism-config.xml parameter
09/24/2018 - Updated for Prism 8.0.0
08/09/2018 - Updated for Prism 7.05/e
09/07/2017 - Correction for APPDIR
05/02/2017 - Updated for Prism 7.03/7.0c
04/04/2016 - Updated for Prism 7.0/7.0a