

**Altium**<sup>®</sup>

# Licensing 101: Altium License Types and Functions



Abe Kealaiki  
Application Engineer

# LICENSING 101: ALTIUM LICENSE TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

One of the strengths of Altium Designer® is that it can serve in a variety of user environments. From the single, unconnected user or a large multi-user, multi-site company, Altium Designer runs efficiently in any of these environments. To streamline the licensing system for supporting one or many of these environments, Altium has a licensing plan that meets your needs. Licensing is tightly interwoven with the Altium online community and user account system, AltiumLive.

The different license types and how to use them are covered in detail in this paper. Also, a quick guide to which type of license would be utilized for each environment you, or your company, may encounter is included. Reading this paper will help you to better understand the license types available, environments each type supports and how you can efficiently manage your software needs using the Altium licensing system.

## LICENSING STRUCTURE

Licensing Altium Designer is integrated into an intricate and robust system of file management, sharing, and usage. Altium Designer license files are shared with users in three types, each with their advantages and intended uses. A **Standalone** license file is intended for single users or single computers. **Private Server** licenses are intended for multiple users on a network, where each user can access a single computer or server, using the license on an “as needed” basis. **On-Demand** licenses, probably the most popular, support a large number of environments, from a single user to multiple users, across all platforms and environments.

Let's take a look at the features and benefits of each license type. **Note:** For a quick cheat sheet, you may browse to the end of the document for a summary of the license types and the configurations they support.

## LICENSE TYPES AND KEY FEATURES

### On-Demand License –

On-Demand (previously known as “global floating”) licenses are probably the most popular license type due to the features and options made available to the user and license manager. They are also popular as they support multiple users in multiple environment types. On-Demand licensing is available anywhere an Internet connection is available. However, if the user is going to be disconnected temporarily, for traveling purposes or security reasons, the license can be roamed. When the license is roamed, the user sets the length of time that the license will be roamed, and the license seat will be unavailable to other users until the period has ended or the license has been returned from “roam” status. If the license contains multiple seats, all other seats will remain available to other users.

On-Demand license types require an AltiumLive user account. AltiumLive user accounts can be added by the company group administrator. On-Demand licenses are activated through the AltiumLive portal, shown in Figure 1. Once you have an active AltiumLive account, your login is linked to the company licenses and you can access them on any machine that has access to the Internet. If access is removed, be sure to roam the license before disconnecting from the Internet.

On-Demand licenses support groups and group assignments. The group administrator can set up groups within

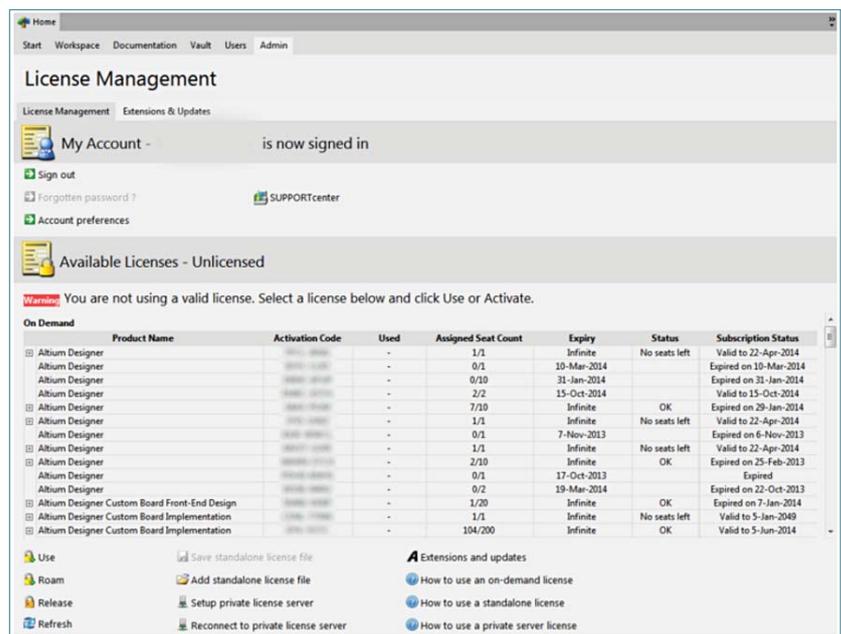


Figure 1: An example of On-Demand licenses listed in Altium Designer. Unlicensed indicates the license has not yet been put into use.

# LICENSING 101: ALTIUM LICENSE TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

AltiumLive and assign licenses to each group. The administrator can allocate seats to different groups, further managing how licenses may be shared between users. As an example, a license with ten seats may have five allocated to users that work on the schematic portion of the design and another five seats allocated to users for the PCB design.

## Real-Time Usage Statistics

On-Demand licensing has another large advantage over the other license types by providing real-time usage statistics. Using the AltiumLive **Dashboard** (Figure 2), group administrators can now log into the **Dashboard** and view license usage information. This helps the group administrator identify usage trends and needs, including peak usage times, total licenses and seats used, etc. With this information, the group administrator can quantify license usage and verify license needs are being met, or if there is a need for acquiring more licenses.

As a group administrator, the real-time usage statistics put a number of tools and options available at your fingertips. Understanding and knowing the license usage and trends are just the beginning. Utilizing this function, you can put in place alerts to make you aware of peak usage times, user and group usage, and knowing when available licenses are becoming dangerously low. Real-time usage statistics make license management much easier and more efficient.

## Private Server License –

Private Server (previously known as “floating”) licenses are common among companies that will have multiple users sharing licenses within the company network; they are easily shared among users. These licenses are ideal for a company with Altium Designer running on multiple machines. This license type is usually the choice for companies needing to share licenses but are not able to connect to the Altium On-Demand license server.

The license files are setup and managed by an administrator, usually an IT administrator, on a local server. The Private License Server software is downloaded from AltiumLive and installed on a server as shown in Figure 3. The licenses are then

activated on the server and allocated in sessions to users as needed and returned to the server once their work has concluded for that session. Users set up Altium Designer to access the license server on the License Management page (Figure 4). Since these licenses are hosted on the user’s local network, the user does not need to log into their AltiumLive account to access their license, or have internet access, at all.

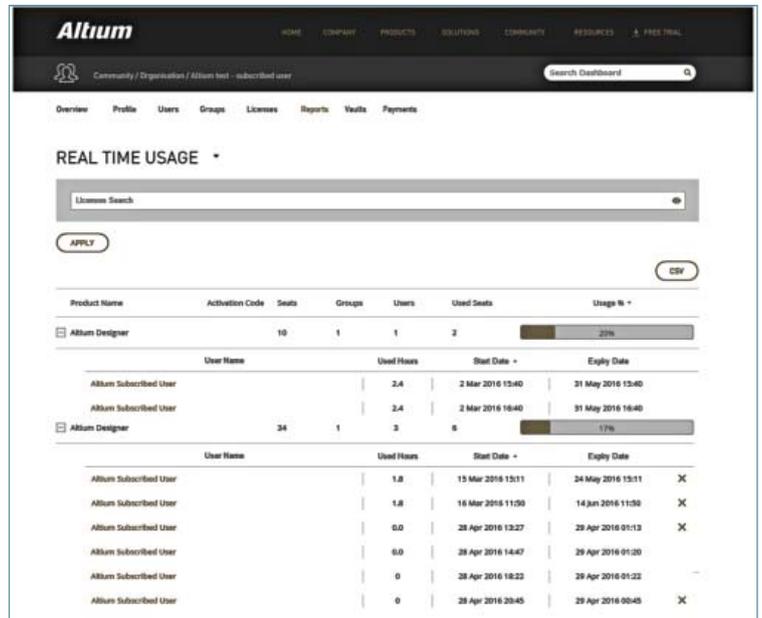


Figure 2: On-Demand licensing includes access to license usage, letting the group administrator more effectively manage licenses.

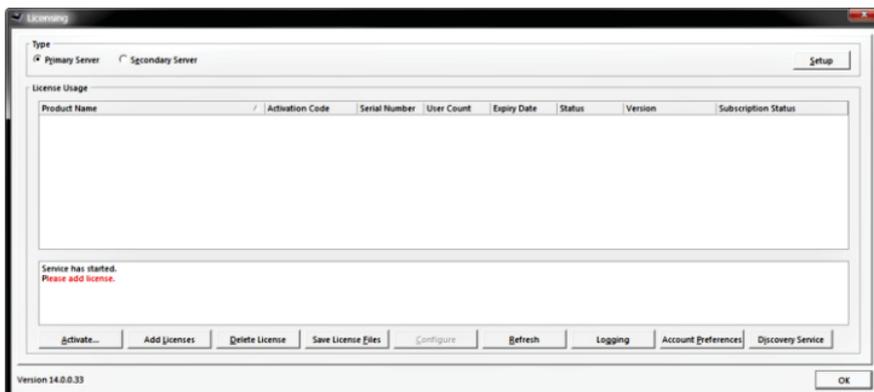


Figure 3: Private License Manager Dialog – Licenses are activated through this service.

# LICENSING 101: ALTIUM LICENSE TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

Private Server licenses may be configured to allow license allocations to different users and groups for further license management. Once setup, the administrator assigns users to a group, by computer name, and then assigns a seat count to the group. **Note:** Altium Private License Server references machine names, not user names when managing user, group and license usage.



Figure 4: User Interface connected to the Private License Server within Altium Designer

Companies with Altium Vault may take advantage of Vault-Based Private Server Licensing. For companies that have Altium Component Vault or higher, the option to run the Vault-Based Private License Server provides additional benefits. This feature allows further reporting options, and better user and group management.

## Standalone License –

Standalone licenses are popular for situations where a single PC or server will utilize Altium Designer. Standalone licenses are installed locally onto the computer by activating the license through the user's AltiumLive account, or downloading the \*.alf license file from the AltiumLive Dashboard and adding it in the My Account/Administration page in Altium Designer. Standalone licenses are limited to the single site license type and can only be used by one user or PC. Altium does allow a temporary install of the license file on a laptop or home computer for temporary usage.

## GEOGRAPHICAL ASSIGNMENTS

Each license has a geographic site assignment. This determines the location(s) that the license and software can operate without violating the End-User License Agreement. There are three types available; Single Site, Continental, and Global.

### Single Site –

The most common assignment, this license type is used within one geographical location and allows for usage of that license at the site of the company shipping address. Altium does allow for using this license type in more than one location. Provided the same user use it for temporary purposes, the software may be used in a home office or, while traveling, a laptop computer.

### Continental –

As the name implies, this license type allows the same license to be used on a given continent. This is useful for companies that have multiple sites and locations across the country. As an example, an On-Demand license that has Continental permissions may be used by one person to do the wiring design in the company office in Massachusetts, and then pass the work over to another engineer in the PCB division located in California. Seat counts still apply, so if they are sharing a license, the license must be used and released accordingly.

### Global –

Global licenses can be used anywhere in the world. Used with On-Demand license types, this geographical assignment allows a company that has locations around the world to share a license or seats of a license. Taking the same scenario as above, the users would be able to accomplish the same scenario, with the exception that they would be in different offices in different countries. Another benefit to this license type is if the user needs to travel to a facility or office in another country, they only need to be able to access the license, whether through a VPN for Private Server, or online for On-Demand.

# LICENSING 101: ALTIUM LICENSE TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

## ROLE OF ALTIUMLIVE ACCOUNTS AND GROUP ADMINISTRATORS

Altium license management is interwoven tightly with our online platform, AltiumLive. This platform allows for account, user and license management. Each company will have an AltiumLive account with at least one group administrator assigned upon initial purchase of the license. The group administrator is usually identified during the purchase process as the person responsible for license and account management.

Group administrators can add users, manage groups (On-Demand Licenses), and track license usage and needs. For a standard user to be able to view, access and use a license, they should be added as a user of AltiumLive. As mentioned earlier, a Private Server license does not require that a user is added to the account, but it is still recommended they be added for technical support purposes. The platform a group administrator accesses to manage these items is the dashboard shown in Figure 5, only available to group administrators.

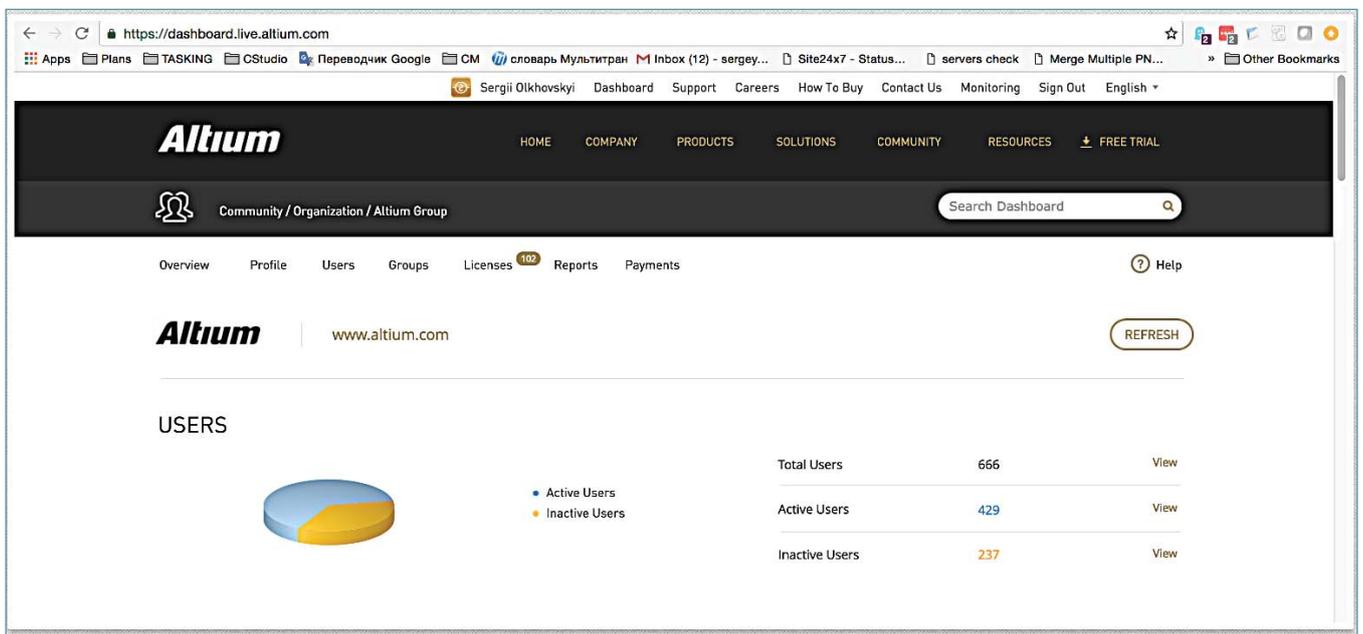


Figure 5: AltiumLive Dashboard – Available to Group Administrators for managing users and licenses.

# LICENSING 101: ALTIUM LICENSE TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

---

## LICENSE TYPE – QUICK REFERENCE CHART

Use the chart below to identify the best license type quickly for your current needs.

### License Types and Supported Environments

User Class	On-Demand	Private Server	Standalone
Single User/PC	x	x	x
Multiple Users	x	x	
Single Site	x	x	x
Multi-Site (Continental/Global)	x	x	
Internet Always Available	x	x	x
No Internet Connection (Tools operable offline)	x	x	x
Real Time License Usage Statistics	x		

**Note:** On-Demand can be roamed before disconnecting from the internet to be used temporarily offline.

### SUMMARY

Altium's licensing system is robust and filled with options for every user and environment type. In today's EDA world, electrical engineers could potentially work in a plethora of situations, and sometimes the user will encounter different scenarios within the scope of their job as engineers. You can rest assured that Altium Designer will be fully supported in just about any environment that you will need. Using the guidelines and information provided in this document, be sure to select the license type and some seats that will make your company the most productive. If you have users that are waiting for a license to be available, this is lost productivity time, and we want to be sure you have every opportunity to get your products to market on time and efficiently. This begins with a correct and efficient licensing configuration for your company.

# LICENSING 101: ALTIUM LICENSE TYPES AND FUNCTIONS

---

## USEFUL LINKS

### Altium Designer Licensing

<http://www.altium.com/altium-designer/licensing>

### Altium Designer Licensing System

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ADOH/Altium+Designer+Licensing+System>

### Using an On-Demand License

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ADOH/Using+an+On-Demand+License>

### Using a Private Server License

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ADOH/Using+a+Private+Server+License>

### Using a Standalone License

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ADOH/Using+a+Standalone+License>

### AltiumLive Dashboard – Managing Licenses

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ALIVE/AltiumLive+Dashboard+-+Managing+Licenses>

### AltiumLive Dashboard – Managing Users

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ALIVE/AltiumLive+Dashboard+-+Managing+Users>

### AltiumLive Dashboard – Managing Licenses

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ALIVE/AltiumLive+Dashboard+-+Managing+Licenses>

### Licensing System – FAQs

<http://techdocs.altium.com/display/ADOH/Licensing+System+-+FAQs>