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Windows Vista
Microsoft

[Downgrade Windows Vista to Windows XP](#)

= *Nightmare*

It's Windows Vista or nothing in Microsoft's perspective. The Redmond company has stated numerous times that Vista is its top priority when it comes to client operating systems. In fact, as of last year, Microsoft has ended support for the vast majority of Windows platforms older than Windows XP SP2. Still, while focusing strongly on Windows Vista, Microsoft is allowing customers to downgrade the latest operating system to the previous version.

In this context, all the editions of Windows Vista falling under the Business category can be downgraded to Windows XP professional. The initiative is designed to deliver an alternative to customers that have acquired Vista along with new hardware but are not yet ready to perform the migration to the latest Windows platform. However, Microsoft has done little to ensure that new computer buyers and even channel partners will be able to seamlessly transition back to Windows XP from Windows Vista.

"OEM Downgrade Rights for desktop operating systems apply to Windows Vista Business & Vista Ultimate End users can use the following media for their downgrade: Volume Licensing media (provided the end user has a Volume Licensing agreement), Retail (FPP), or System Builder hologram CD (provided the software is acquired in accordance with the Microsoft OEM System Builder License). Use of the downgraded operating system is governed by the Windows Vista Business License Terms, and the end user cannot use both the downgrade operating system and Windows Vista Business," reads a fragment of the Microsoft information for Volume Licensing.

Only OEM editions of Windows Vista Business and Vista Ultimate can be downgraded to Windows XP Professional. Microsoft offers no downgrade rights for Vista Home Basic or Home Premium. Additionally, the customers that do embark on a downgrade process will find themselves managing complex activation requirements. An override-key is necessary in order to activate Windows XP Professional on machines that have shipped with Windows Vista pre-installed. Customers feel that this puts them through unnecessary pains, according to [CRN](#). The Redmond Company revealed that it is aware of the situation and that it is working to change the process.

Although Windows Vista Enterprise is in Microsoft's vision an entirely new version of the Windows platform, the company offers the same downgrade rights as for the Business and Ultimate editions.