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Download the Official Windows XP SP3 Overview

Straight from Microsoft

The official overview of Windows XP Service Pack 3 is available for download straight from Microsoft. While the Redmond company has been synchronizing the development milestones for Windows Vista SP1: Windows Server 2008, formerly codenamed Longhorn; and Windows XP SP3, the third and final service pack for Vista's predecessor, was slipped into the background. In Microsoft's perspective, Vista SP1 and Windows Server 2008 can be nowhere than at the center-stages of the upcoming releases for the first quarter of the next year. Planned by mid 2008, XP SP3, although long overdue and heading for approximately 80% of the operating system market, is not on Microsoft's priorities list. "Microsoft works to continually improve the performance, security, and stability of the Windows operating system. As part of this effort, Microsoft develops updates, fixes, and other improvements that address issues reported by the company's customers and partners. To make it easier for customers to get these updates and enhancements, Microsoft periodically combines them into a single package, and makes that package available for all Windows customers. These packages are called service packs", Microsoft revealed in the introduction of the Overview of Windows XP Service Pack 3. With the Release Candidates of Vista SP1 and Windows Server 2008 heading to increased testing pools the past week, and with Microsoft cooking the first public build of the first refresh for its latest Windows client, the official overview for XP SP3 is the only crumb from the service pack fiesta over at the Redmond company. The Release Candidate of XP SP3 in a pre-final stage has already shipped to MSDN and TechNet subscribers. With Vista SP1 RC going public any day now, a similar release of XP SP3 is not far behind. The overview for XP SP3 has recently been made available, but Microsoft refreshed its availability as of December 10. "Windows XP SP3 combines all previously released performance, security, and stability updates. It also provides a limited number of new and enhanced functionalities, although it does not significantly change the Windows XP experience or bring functionality from newer versions of Windows to Windows XP. The goals of Windows XP SP3 are to: provide a new baseline for customers still deploying Windows XP, to help them avoid the inconvenience of applying individual updates; [and] to fill gaps in the updates users might have missed by declining individual updates when using Automatic Updates, and to deliver updates not made available through Windows Update", Microsoft added.

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