

By: April 29, 2008
By: Apurva Bhatnagar, Technology News Editor

Make No Mistake About It, the XP SP3 RTM Direct Download Links Are Live

And the service pack is available for download straight from Microsoft

Make no mistake about it, the gold bits of Windows XP Service Pack 3 are available for download straight from Microsoft, contrary to what the company is claiming. On April 29, Chris Keroack, Release Manager, Windows Serviceability delivered unexpected news about the third and final service pack for Windows XP. With an excess of 73% of operating system users worldwide running some variation of Windows XP, April 29, 2008 promised to allow a consistent mass of consumers to exhale, having held their breath for what appeared to be the imminent delivery of Service Pack 3. As early as April 21, the date when SP3 was released to manufacturing, Microsoft confirmed that at the end of the month the service pack would go live on Windows Update and the Download Center. But on April 29, the Redmond company only revealed that it was postponing the general availability of the final version of XP SP3 because of incompatibility issues affecting a small segment of customers running Microsoft Dynamics Retail Management System. Following this initial announcement, the Redmond giant also informed that it was discontinuing the distribution of Windows Vista SP1 for the same Dynamics RMS compatibility problems. But at the same time, Microsoft was well under way with the process of delivering XP SP3 via WU and the Download Center. Illustrative of this is the fact that the gold bits of the service pack are up for grabs straight from the Redmond company's WU servers. You will be able to find the [links](#) for the English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Czech, Polish, Japanese, Hebrew and Chinese language versions of Windows XP SP3 RTM Build 5512 [here](#). Of course, Microsoft doesn't want end users downloading XP SP3 just yet. "Customers should not download Microsoft software from links posted on non-Microsoft websites, when those links point directly to the executable", a Microsoft spokesperson stated to [Mary Jo Foley](#). "Customers should always download from a page on Microsoft.com that provides all relevant download details, installation instructions, and release notes. In this particular case, it's possible that some 3rd party websites are linking to the Windows XP SP3 software that we have published for MSDN and TechNet subscribers. Since we cannot confirm the source of every link that 3rd parties provide, our recommendation is that customers wait until we've published Windows XP SP3 to Windows Update and the Download Center."