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Microsoft Could Keep XP SP3 Available after June 30, 2008

According to Steve Ballmer

The **third service pack for Windows XP**, and also the last major update that the operating system will get in its lifetime, was released to manufacturing on April 21, 2008. The service pack indicates that there is still life left into the aging platform, now over six years old, even though Microsoft is rushing it to the availability cut-off date. June 30, 2008, is the official end of availability milestone for Windows XP. After mid-2008, the Redmond company plans, with a few exceptions, not to deliver XP via the retail and OEM channels. But at the same time, the possibility exists that Microsoft continue to offer the predecessor of Windows Vista even after the summer of this year. Microsoft Chief Executive Officer Steve Ballmer hinted in Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium, on Thursday, that the cut-off date for XP might not be set in stone (via Yahoo News). According to Ballmer, customer demand will ultimately be the deal breaker when it comes down to the company's decision to stop selling XP. Microsoft's CEO kept a strong focus on the company's latest Windows operating system, saying that the vast majority of customers acquiring a new computer get it preloaded with Windows Vista, and not XP. Ballmer indicated that, in the end, the Redmond company will respond to its consumers, and in the eventuality that Windows client sells will point to a strong preference for XP, the platform will continue to be available. Microsoft has already shifted its position once regarding the availability of XP, at the end of 2007. At that time, the Redmond company gave in to pressure from both end users and original equipment manufacturers and pushed back the cut-off date for XP from January 31, all the way to June 30. At this point in time, Microsoft plans to continue selling XP, now complete with **Service Pack 3** via system builders until 2009, and through OEMs for ultra-low-cost-PCs until mid-2010 or one year after the availability of Windows 7. Vista's predecessor will be supported until 2014.

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