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[Microsoft: Forget Windows 7 and XP SP3, It's Vista SP1 or Nothing](#)

Don't wait for Windows 7 - Don't stick with XP SP3

Windows Logos
Microsoft

Are you considering skipping Windows Vista altogether, even in the context of [Service Pack 1](#)? Do you think that Windows XP, now with Service Pack 3, is a perfectly viable equivalent? Are you looking to the end of 2009, waiting for the alternative that Windows 7 will deliver? Well, don't! Microsoft has come out gunning at [Windows 7](#) and XP SP3 yet again in an effort to boost Vista SP1 adoption. In fact, the Redmond giant has made its position very clear: "Don't wait for Windows 7!" At the same time, XP SP3 is also mentioned along with the next iteration of the Windows client in an effort to convince users that neither provides sufficient reason to skip Vista SP1. "Some customers are considering whether to deploy Windows Vista or whether to skip in anticipation of Windows 7. The discussion is often phrased as one of balancing costs and timing of releases. By not deploying Windows Vista, it means missing out on the proven benefits such as better security, productivity, search, mobility, manageability, and infrastructure optimization. Windows Vista works with more applications and devices than ever before and can be significantly less expensive to support than Windows XP SP3," [Microsoft](#) stated. "There is no need to wait for Windows 7," the Redmond company continued. As a matter of fact, Microsoft is pimping Vista SP1 as a natural stage in the evolution to Windows 7. Moving from XP to Vista, users have gone through a transition period, where they have assimilated what the company referred to as "kernel and device level innovation." But this transition is over now, following the release of Vista SP1, and this is why the latest version of Windows is presented as a stepping stone to Windows 7. "Moving to Windows Vista will ease migration to Windows 7," Microsoft promises. "It is a goal of the Windows 7 release to minimize application compatibility for customers who have deployed Windows Vista (...). The Windows 7 release is expected to have only minor changes in these areas. Customers who are still using Windows XP when Windows 7 releases will have a similar application compatibility experience moving to Windows 7 as exists moving to Windows Vista from Windows XP." In all fairness, Microsoft barely mentions [Windows XP SP3](#). But it does focus on what would happen to customers avoiding Vista SP1 and looking to upgrade straight to Windows 7. In the Redmond company's view, sticking with XP SP3 means settling for inferior "security, support, regulatory compliance, and reduced flexibility." In the scenario put together by Microsoft, customers that fail to move to Windows Vista will, by the time they are evaluating Windows 7, and prepare for adoption end up with an obsolete Windows XP SP3 running outdated software. Microsoft warned that one of the biggest issues with remaining loyal to XP SP3 is that third-party developers could stop supporting Vista's predecessor before they are ready to make the jump to Windows 7. "For the vast majority of companies, deployment, application, and device support are well-established for Windows Vista, making it an operational best practice to begin migrating now," Microsoft advised. It is clear that the main focus is not on end users, but on business customers. While general consumers have the freedom of upgrading immediately to the next edition of Windows, the same is not valid for corporations. Business users can take over a year to move to a new Windows release, while migration is generally considered only after the first Service Pack is released. Case in point, Microsoft is struggling to convince corporate clients to make the jump to Windows Vista SP1, at over a year and a half since the business availability of the operating system. "Historically, mainstream deployment occurs not when Microsoft releases a product but 18 months later. While the mainstream deployment cycle is beginning for Windows Vista now, it isn't expected to begin for Windows 7 until at least mid-2011. With Microsoft set to release a new version of Windows every three years, there will always be a new version on the

horizon during a typical evaluation period. This means that customers should not base their deployment decisions on the anticipated release-to-market (RTM) date but on an 'evaluation completion date', sometime after RTM and dependent on the customer," Microsoft added.