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Longhorn Revived

[Microsoft Windows Code Name Longhorn](#)

The first milestone in Longhorn Reloaded

So Microsoft left Longhorn bleeding for a while and abandoned the project in order to postpone the release worthy of a true Windows user. Vista came out instead and though skeptics threw stones at it and badmouthed it, Microsoft's Wow hit the market with quite a blow. Now most of the users are striving to get along with Vista prices and install the OS on their systems. From the name of Longhorn to Vista there's a long way (apart from the fact that there is 3 letter difference between the two and the letters of one are not duplicated in the other). But 'what in a name?' some will say; it is the comfort of using it and the functionality that counts. Well, that well chosen Longhorn name decided not to fade into the history just yet. And Microsoft decided to use it in their latest version of Windows Server. On the other hand, Longhorn followers (Joejoe group) resurrected it and took from where Microsoft left the build of a new OS. Longhorn Reloaded is the name and Milestone 1 is the release. I don't know how those guys managed to get their hands on the source code, but I think it is worth a test just to see why Microsoft abandoned it and started working on Vista based on Server 2003 (amazing release by the way) kernel and what Joejoe group's infusion is. So I downloaded the torrent available on their website, put it on a disc and started booting for a clean install on a Windows Vista Basic equipped system. This may come as a surprise for some of you, but my try ended with failure at each attempt. Vista behaved strange and did not allow me to run the setup because of compatibility issues. No biggie, I was prepared for this obstacle with a Windows XP equipped system. Well, what do you say? "It lives!" indeed just to quote our Technology News Editor. The system was not as fancy as the one running Vista and it had only 1GB of RAM and the CPU was also less powerful (a 3000+ Sempron does not even dream to match a CoreDuo). But it fit the profile I needed. No problems here. It ran flawlessly from the first install attempt. The time to copy the files, rid the system partition of the XP file via NTFS formatting (by the way, you can also format the drive FAT style) and to install Longhorn Reloaded was almost the same as in the case of XP. Only this time it seemed to take longer. What made my eyebrows rise was the fact that it looked very much like the kernel it was built upon. Also, the references to Microsoft and Windows made me feel like installing a genuine Redmond company release. The differences are not noticeable to the untrained eye, but we managed to realize that the installation window has been stripped of the familiar XP background and replaced with something much steeper and blunt. The Windows watermarks and logos are no more, but the basic steps for installation are the same. Brief presentations are displayed from time to time, announcing the new features implemented. After the installation time slowly dripped the OS was ready to make its first Milestone boot on the computer. The looks were quite different from what I expected. I was foreseeing a nifty interface with plenty of glass to see through already implemented and out of Windows features. Well, it seems that Milestone 1 was a bit thrifty and all it provided was a combination between Windows XP and Vista. From the first look, one can clearly see that the running OS is a hybrid composed of both XP and Vista elements. The icons are Vista, but the feel is definitely XP. There aren't too many changes at this level. However, trying to install some drivers for your hardware may be a little difficult. My attempt in installing the graphic card resulted in utter failure as at one point before actually installing the files a message prompted and announced that it can only run in Windows environment and that was not it. One addition (compared to XP) of the operating system is Parental Controls, a feature sported in Vista by Internet Explorer 7. In Longhorn it just allows you to give the children the right to play a game or not according to some predefined standards. The interesting thing is that although there is a plethora of

compatibility issues whenever the OS freezes, a program crashes because of some unexpected error, you will be prompted with a screen similar to that in XP. The two options in there are Cancel or Send (hold your panties) Microsoft the report on the error. Obviously, Microsoft is the last entity that will help you with problems in what Joejoe calls "abandonware". And in my case these prompts were pretty often, not to mention the freezes and the following restarts in order to get the OS going again. Despite my excitement, immediately after installing the OS I was in for some trouble as nothing worked properly. Of course, the two months Vista experience makes a huge contribution to this opinion as it never disobeyed my orders. I am sorry I do not agree with Longhorn Reloaded enthusiasts on this one, but I think Microsoft should make it a pet project and continue improving the abandoned version whenever there is time and with whatever human resources are available. I am sure that there must be a couple of programmers and designers just waiting for a challenge. From what I have seen on the Internet, the looks are pretty cool once the Aero is on, but functionality is way under today's standards and if you are planning to make a run from Vista to Longhorn Reloaded, don't. Milestone 1 gives no reason for such crazy act. In my case, Device Manager showed a multitude of hardware issues. Of course none of the drivers provided worked and I could not connect to the Internet as the Network Card was not detected at all. Trying the disc burning feature resulted in an unsuccessful pre-burn check. But let's look on the bright side. The sidebar available is similar to that in Vista and supports gadgets like clock, news feeds, contacts, quick launch or image slide show. And if you can append to it that glossy Aero look then you've got yourself an eye candy. Regarding the resources necessary for OS sustenance, these were not quite low and in idle state, it could compete with Vista as almost 500MB were eaten in one gulp. And the CPU acted crazy though. The levels rose and decreased randomly, without any activity going on. After a while, it stabilized, but the general performance was very much under my standard. As you probably know, each Windows Explorer window has a Help menu. Leave aside that there is no kind of documentation implemented and expand it. A very interesting option is available: "Is this copy of Windows legal?" Joejoe group however does not give an answer and Microsoft continues to keep the silence as to giving them the right to develop one of their codes. Some other issues, minor ones but quite nagging at one point, are the refresh of the desktop which can only be done manually as the nifty Recycle Bin shows. Some of you may know that the thrash can icon on the desktop fills up automatically every time you send files to it and empties as soon as you eliminate them from there. Obviously, it is not the case here, as you will have to refresh the desktop in order to see the actual state of the Bin. Additionally, NumLock has to be activated after each boot of the OS. Oh, and if you buy that "abandonware" thing, read Microsoft's EULA carefully and you will see that under no circumstance is it possible for the Redmond company to give up the source code for any of their products. Windows 95 is dead for some time now and you don't see the code legally in other "hands" but Microsoft's. There has been no action from Microsoft by now, but I am sure that they are just waiting to see how advanced the development will get and the time to reach a final version. I'll give you a little hint to make a general idea: Vista had an army behind it, it still isn't flawless and it took some years; Joejoe group is formed by seven people (maybe others will join). Some action will definitely be taken as Windows name is employed quite frequently. In my opinion, Microsoft's terms of agreement and the EULA are enough to reject Longhorn Reloaded as illegal, but that is between the Redmond giant and Joejoe group. The users have absolutely no blame in testing the OS and all they will lose is the precious weekend time wasted on the first milestone. I suggest you give it a little more time until the code lines settle down and fall in the right places and then give it a try. If the project will still stand, that is. I don't really know what the amount of effort and code invested by Joejoe group in this project is, but it would be interesting to compare the original 4074 Longhorn build with Longhorn Reloaded. And this just to see what has been changed, appended or removed from Microsoft's "abandonware".