

By February 2008 Technology News Editor

## [New Windows XP SP3 RC2 Build 3311 Available - Direct Download Link](#)

### *An evolution from Build 3300*

Windows XP Service Pack 3 Release Candidate 2 was released following the RTM of Windows Vista Service Pack 1 and Windows Server 2008 Service Pack 1 in the first week of February. Microsoft failed to diverge from the strategy of synchronized development milestones for the two service packs and the latest Windows server platform, with the only difference being in the nature of the builds. While Vista SP1 and XP SP3 had been virtually joined at the hip throughout their development in 2007, the service packs diverged in February. Vista SP1 moved from RC1 Refresh 2 directly into RTM, while XP SP3 evolved from RC1 Refresh 2 to Release Candidate 2 with no release to manufacturing date in sight. As the initial build of XP SP3 RC2 was released only to a selected pool of 15,000 Microsoft testers, the company subsequently opened up the Release Candidate 2 testing process to all XP users on February 19, 2008. XP SP3 RC2 was dropped via Windows Update, accessible via a registry script designed to permit copies of XP SP2 to detect the third and last service pack for XP on the WU servers. One small detail that Microsoft neglected to make public was the direct download link of XP SP3 RC2. This is now available, and users will not have to integrate the RC2 build via Windows Update. The XP SP3 RC2 bits are up for grabs via this [link](#) and it will offer Build 3311. The initial XP SP3 RC2 version offered through Windows Update was [Build 3300](#), and this means that Microsoft has pushed onward with the service pack compared with the release of last week, which essentially delivered only the Windows XP SP3 Release Candidate 2.exe registry script. The official [release notes for XP SP3 RC2](#) remain unchanged. Download Windows XP SP3 Release Candidate 2 (RC2) via this [link](#).