

By: ~~March 2008~~ ~~March 2008~~, Technology News Editor

[Vista SP1 RTM Confirmed for March 18, 2008 - Introducing the New Vista SP1 Boxes](#)

Courtesy of Amazon.com

The saga of the general availability of Windows Vista Service Pack 1 RTM nears its end. Microsoft will drop Vista SP1 on March 18, 2008. Having been released to manufacturing on February 4, 2008, along with Windows Server 2008, Vista SP1 did not ship immediately to end users as expected. Instead, Microsoft postponed the full release of the first service pack for its latest Windows client until mid-March. In this context, the wait for Vista SP1 RTM is nearly over. At the same time, Microsoft did offer the final bits of the service pack as early as the RTM week. The first to get their hands on Vista SP1 RTM were the 15,000 testers that contributed to the beta testing process. Microsoft also debuted the production of Vista SP1 DVDs, and served the bits to OEMs. MSDN and TechNet Plus subscribers are among the select few that were permitted access not only to the standalone Vista SP1 package, but also to the slipstream version of the service pack, the ISO DVD with Vista and SP1 integrated. Without an actual choice of their own, end users found themselves last in line, shielded by Microsoft from potential hardware driver integration problems. But the consumer release of Vista SP1 gold is just around the corner. Amazon.com is already accepting pre-orders for Vista SP1 and offers this snippet of information: "availability: this item will be released on March 19, 2008. Pre-order now! Ships from and sold by Amazon.com. Gift-wrap available." Amazon.com also features the new boxes for Windows Vista [Ultimate SP1](#) for just \$299.99, [Home Premium SP1](#) for \$215.99, and [Home Premium Upgrade SP1](#) for \$94.99. As you can see, the price cut, at least for Vista Ultimate SP1 full-retail edition, is quite consistent, no less than \$100. But Amazon.com also delivers one final bit of information, the confirmation that Vista SP1 will be released on March 18, 2008. "Pre-order this version to get SP1 included in the box. Or buy Windows Vista Ultimate now, then update to SP1 online--free of charge--when the new versions are released on March 18, 2008," reads a message on the website.