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Windows Vista
Microsoft

[Vista SP1, and then Windows 7, Windows 8 and Non-Windows Midori](#)

Singularity is also in the mix

2008 saw the release of Windows Vista Service Pack 1, Windows XP Service Pack 3 and Windows Server 2008, but Microsoft's journey on the Windows path is far from over. In fact the software giant is already hammering away at Windows 7, Vista's successor, and has also started to plan Windows 8, the Windows client to succeed Windows 7. At the same time, the Redmond giant is flirting with non-Windows operating systems, designed to essentially break the mold, and ultimately replace Windows. However, such a scenario is not even on the horizon, even though projects such as Singularity and Midori represent Microsoft's exploration of life after Windows. Windows 7 is so far the sole operating system officially confirmed by Microsoft, and planned for availability by the end of 2009, but no later than the beginning of 2010. Microsoft is committed never to repeat the 2001-2007 gap between the releases of XP and Vista, and therefore has increased the frequency at which it will serve new major versions of Windows to approximately three years. At this point in time there is little information available about Windows 7, let alone Windows 8. But the fact is that Windows 8 is also in Microsoft's plans, and mentioned across various documents from the Redmond company, which has been completely mute on the version of Windows to replace Windows 7, but taking into account a three year development process, Windows 7 could drop as early as 2012, or as late as 2013. At that time, Microsoft would continue to offer support not only for Windows 7, but also for Windows Vista and even Windows XP SP3. In this regard, Windows is very likely to make it well into the next decade. Now, there is nothing Windows-related from Microsoft beyond Windows 8 as the company has so far managed not to leak anything connected with a potential Windows 9. In fact, Windows 9 might not even exist. This because it took a small team over at Microsoft research, led by Galen Hunt, principal researcher and manager of Microsoft Research Redmond's Operating Systems Group and Jim Larus, a research-area manager in the Software Improvement Group, just five years to build a new, non-Windows operating system from the ground up, dubbed Singularity. At the beginning of the year, namely on March 4, 2008, the [Singularity](#) prototype became available for download via CodePlex. "Singularity was only possible because the environment at Microsoft Research allowed us to collect a diverse group of researchers eager to participate in a project to fundamentally rethink a basic part of everyday computing," Larus explained at the time. "Applying everyone's research perspectives helped us understand and demonstrate a new way to construct software systems." [Singularity](#) doesn't have even a single line of Windows code in it. It is a research platform built entirely in managed code, in an extension of C# in fact, and is a very basic, minimalist operating system not meant to become a commercial product. According to the two Microsoft researchers who built Singularity starting from zero, Windows, Linux and Mac OS X are all based on the Multics operating system from the 1960s. Singularity is in contrast a completely modern platform. But while Singularity could never evolve past the stage of a research project, Microsoft has yet another ace up its sleeve. It is a project called [Midori](#) and led by Eric Rudder, Senior Vice President, Technical Strategy. Intimately connected to Singularity, Midori is Microsoft's venture into a non-Windows world. Already in development, and considering that Singularity took only five years to develop with just a small team, Midori could be ready for general availability sometime after Windows 8 hits, around 2015. Not many details have been made public about Midori, except that the operating system will represent Microsoft's move into the many-core era, with support for multicore processors well past what Vista offers today. The non-Windows platform will

stretch naturally into the cloud, and is likely to take advantage of the architecture already deployed with Singularity including software-isolated processes, inter-SIPs contract-based communication channels and manifest-based programs. Additionally, Microsoft is building Midori as a completely modular operating system, a componentization that will permit the evolution of various aspects of the platform independently of one another. In this context, [Midori](#) will be the death of mammoth Windows releases.