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## [What Is Microsoft Really Saying with XP SP3 RC2 Refresh Build 5508](#)

*Not much, but not nothing*

When it comes down to the [third and final service pack for Windows XP](#), Microsoft has not managed to be extremely chatty. By all means, the Redmond company has successfully swept XP SP3 under the Windows Vista SP1 rug and kept the entire deal extremely hush-hush. With Vista SP1 at center stage, and artificially pushed into the limelight, XP SP3 suffered in the background. But the truth of the matter is that XP, via SP2 and over 70% of the operating system market has enough momentum on its own to outpace Vista, even without the adjacent and inherent advertising. On March 25, Microsoft made available for download Windows XP SP3 Release Candidate 2 Refresh [Build 5508](#). But what is the company really saying with this new release? Well, first of all, Microsoft is not saying anything at all about the final delivery date of XP SP3. "As with RC1 and RC2, we encourage feedback on XP SP3 RC2 Refresh via this TechNet forum. Information regarding XP SP3 overall can be found on the Windows XP TechCenter. Windows XP SP3 is scheduled for release in the first half of 2008," stated the Release Manager for Windows Serviceability. A potential deadline in the second half of April has been thrown around as the delivery date for XP SP3, but Microsoft has neither confirmed nor denied such a scenario. They are however sticking to the "by the mid-2008" strategic answer to any queries. Build 5508 is simply saying that Microsoft is not yet done with the testing process. Outside of the added HD Audio support and the tweaking of the Windows Update mechanism, the Redmond company is nothing short of mute. Still, from the last XP SP3 RC2 version dropped on March 6, namely Build 3311, Microsoft moved to the leaked 5503 variant in the same month. And despite jumping from Build 3311 all the way to 5503, the private build of XP SP3 was labeled an interim development milestone and nothing more. And on the heels of Build 5503, version 5508 comes knocking released only through Windows Update and not as a stand-alone package. The initial rumors pointing to the availability of Windows XP SP3 earlier this week proved to be inaccurate. And judging strictly by the pace at which Microsoft has been crawling with the development of XP SP3 it seems that the company is waiting to get the full arsenal of Vista SP1 releases out the door before it ships its last service pack for XP. With Vista SP1 RTM scheduled for availability via Automatic Updates on April 18, it appears that XP SP3 will follow in the second half of the coming month. Windows XP Service Pack 3 Release Candidate 2 Refresh can be downloaded from [here](#).