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## [Windows 7 Between Vista SP1, XP SP3 and Windows 8](#)

*But still scoped for 2010*

Just as Longhorn was a pit-stop between Whistler and Blackcomb, so Windows 7 will be a stage between Windows Vista Service Pack 1 and Windows XP SP3 and [Windows 8](#). Since the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008, Windows 7 Milestone 1 Build 6.1.6519.1 has been the sole source of a fragmented dialog between Microsoft and consumers via leaked details from third-parties, be them among the company's partners or antitrust regulators. At this point in time, the Redmond giant is apparently stuck on a refrain response to all questions about the next iteration of Windows, promising that Windows 7 is scoped to three years from Windows Vista's consumer general availability. At the same time, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates revealed that Windows 7 is on track for delivery as early as 2009. Speculations ensued focused on whether Windows 7's availability in 2009 is via a Beta build, or through the final release. Microsoft revealed to [SeattlePI](#) that "as is standard with the release of a new product, we will be releasing early builds of Windows 7 prior to its General Availability as a means to gain tester feedback." So yes, Windows 7 will be available in 2009, at least in beta. The alpha versions of the operating system are already here, with M1 launched and M2 in the making. But there are additional twists to the Windows 7 development. Ulrich Loeffler, program manager A/NZ for analyst firm IDC, told [ITNews](#) that Windows 7 is very likely to be just Windows Vista 2. Namely, an update to the current code-base of the latest Windows platform with little innovation, but certainly not repeating the divergence in development between XP and Vista. The idea of Windows 7 being just [a pit stop on the way to Windows 8](#) is nothing new, and is meant to explain the two-to-three-year development timeframe of the next Windows operating system. While three years don't seem that much, remember that Microsoft promised to never again repeat the five-year gap between XP and Vista. This is why Steven Sinofsky, Senior Vice President, Windows and Windows Live Engineering Group, is leading the Windows 7 project. This is why Microsoft is stripping down the Windows core and building MinWin. Analyst firm Gartner characterized the Windows operating systems currently available, with a focus on Vista, as monolithic and [collapsing](#) under the weight of legacy software applications and hardware products it needs to continue to support. Instead of continuing on the same path, Microsoft needs an entirely new approach, one that will simplify licensing, feature different modules/kernels/cores that would fit various needs, cut dependencies and integrate virtualization by default. "The more interesting question here is whether one OS can address both architectural requirements. Microsoft believes that it can take its core Windows software offering and package it to address these different architectures. But can this same approach be extended to embrace cloud computing and real-time architecture demands?" Gartner asked. Where Microsoft will take Windows 7 is yet to be determined. The Redmond company however is not just "planning" the next release of Windows, as it repeatedly claims. It is actually building it. It may take a couple of milestones until the first Beta will deliver a consistent taste of Windows 7, but don't expect anything palpable until very late in 2008 or in 2009. At this point it appears that Windows 7 will play on the same team as Windows Vista and will only indicate what's coming in Windows 8.