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Windows
Microsoft

[Windows 7 Just a Pit Stop to Windows 8?](#)

Well...

With Windows Vista barely one year out the door and onto the shelves, and with Windows Vista Service Pack 1, Windows XP Service pack 3 and Windows Server 2008 still in the oven, Microsoft is also focusing on building Windows 7. The successor of Vista was promised in mid 2007 within a timetable of a maximum of three years from the previous Windows release. Of course, this means that Windows 7 could ship as early as in late 2009, or the beginning of 2010. Microsoft failed to provide any accurate information on Windows 7 apart from a few scarce details regarding serving the operating system in both 32-bit and 64-bit versions and also MinWin, the overhauled kernel of the next Windows iteration. Last week reports emerged pointing to the fact that the Redmond company had shipped the first Build of Windows 7 Milestone 1 to key partners. Microsoft failed to confirm [Windows 7 M1 Build 6.1.6519.1](#), but third parties jumped at the opportunity to serve information on the release, the latest of which comes from Long Zheng via MSBob (an anonymous commenter on the [IStartedSomething](#) blog). It appears that Windows 7 M1 build 6.1.6519.1 is as real as it gets, and that the version even comes with some extra eye candy in terms of effects added to the Windows Aero graphical user interface. At the same time, confirmation was offered that Windows 7 would bring to the table a revamped UI, but one that will only debut in the later stages of development, not the first three milestones planned for 2008.

"Windows 7 is also the product of two teams working together: the WEX (or Windows Experience) team, which has primary responsibility for client releases as well as most user-focused features, and COSD (Core Operating System Division), which has responsibility for the kernel, networking, device support, and so on. COSD operates on a longer runway than WEX, meaning that work from that team will show up later in the cycle than work from the WEX team. Note: SteveSi is only in charge of the Windows team. Jon DeVaan runs COSD," MSBob stated. In addition, the intimate connection that is currently being built between Windows Vista and Windows Live will only grow with Windows 7. In Vista, Windows Live has already dug its roots into Windows Mail, Messenger, Photo Gallery and this tendency will only accentuate with the upcoming version of Windows. Microsoft is also planning to release a new version of Windows Live in tandem with Windows 7. A clue to the growing relationship between Windows Live and Windows 7 is of course none other than Steven Sinofsky, the man in charge with the Windows project. "Steven Sinofsky is the senior vice president for the Windows and Windows Live Engineering Group - the user experience of Microsoft Windows and Windows Live services," reads an excerpt out of his official bio. But as of yet, Microsoft has not synchronized the releases of Windows Live and Windows 7. In this respect, it seems that, indeed, Windows 7 will not repeat the gap between Vista and XP and will drop no later than 2010. "Finally, it's important to understand one aspect of the SteveSi philosophy, which might be phrased as 'there is always another version' or, more generally, the philosophy of developing release-rhythm. Under Allchin, Windows tended to get into the 'big-bang or dot-release' mindset - each release either qualified as a dot-release (i.e. 6.0 to 6.1 - a minor update or refresh, usually ignored by the senior folks) or a 'big-bang' release, which would try to change the world in one go. Very few dot-releases every lasted as such. Longhorn was supposed to be a dot-release to XP(that's why it was named after the half-way point between the two big releases - Whistler and Blackcomb)," MSBob explained. Sinofsky, the former head of the Office project, is implementing the same development strategy with Windows as with the Office System. Smaller incremental releases separate by smaller periods of time (just two years for Office). In this context, Windows 7 could very well be nothing more than a pit stop to Windows 8.

Delivered just three years after Vista, Windows 7 will only serve to prepare the fertile soil for Windows 8. And in this regard, Windows 8 will bring on the true Windows evolution, with [Windows 7](#) being somewhat of a more modest release. Still, at this point, it is all nothing more than speculation, especially with the Redmond company completely mute on the subject. "SteveSi is a much more measured guy and believes in regular releases (though his idea of 'regular' might still be long for some people). So teams will have visions that stretch to Win8, and you'll see a first, thoughtful implementation in Win7, that sets the stage for Win8 (and also gathers important data about how the feature is used, to ensure that the complete implementation is better). Different parts of the product will get focus with each release, ensuring that there's always *something* that is a killer feature, but there's no attempt to make sure that *everything* gets an overhaul in every release. Over time, the whole OS will show improvements across the board, but the focus and long-term planning ensures that it's a smooth upward path, not a series of spikes and (unfortunately) valleys," MSBob added.