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Windows 7
Microsoft

[Windows 7 RTM vs. Windows 7 Service Pack 1 \(SP1\)](#)

Breaking the mold

Microsoft's upcoming Windows client and server operating systems have the potential to break the mold of the RTM vs. Service Pack 1 milestones in the context of customers giving themselves green light to embrace the platforms. [Windows 7](#) will make reality what the Redmond company has gone head over heels promoting for its precursor, Windows Vista: waiting for Service Pack 1 will not be necessary, the RTM build will do just fine. Market analysis firm [Gartner](#) predicted that "Windows 7 will not need SP1" in a research authored by Gartner analyst, Michael A. Silver. Still, Silver emphasized that business customers would only start deploying Windows 7 at scale anywhere from 12 to 18 months after the operating system was released.

"The first Service Pack for Windows 7 is not necessary for the operating system's stability and security readiness. However, organizations likely won't be ready to deploy Windows 7 before SP1 ships, so they will include it in their initial deployments," Silver said. "Windows 7 is basically an incremental release of Windows Vista. This has many organizations wondering whether they will be able to begin their Windows 7 deployments within a few months after it ships and without waiting for SP1. Lack of official ISV support likely will delay deployments until after SP1 arrives. That being the case, organizations should plan to integrate SP1 into their initial deployments to reduce the number of major changes that will need to be distributed to production systems."

While for end users upgrading to Windows 7 is as simple as getting a new machine, or just an upgrade license, and preparing for a smooth experience if their current machines are running Vista, less smooth if the upgrade is done from Windows XP, the same is not the case for business users. Corporations often synchronize software and hardware upgrades throughout their IT infrastructure, and even so, there is complex application-compatibility and hardware-compatibility testing involved.

Microsoft has indicated that moving from Vista to Windows 7 is the best strategy compared to skipping Vista and migrating directly from XP to Windows 7. Businesses that will replace XP with Windows 7 will also need to take into consideration training for their employees. The graphical user interface has been overhauled consistently enough from XP to Win 7, and some workers will find it difficult, albeit only at first, to perform at normal parameters with the new OS.

Gartner is advising that business users should allow at least a period of half a year after all independent software vendors introduce support for Windows 7 to test products. Piloting Windows 7 is an integral part of every corporate mainstream deployment, but it is also a process that will push migration back 12 to 18 months since the introduction of the operating system. At this point in time, Service Pack 1 for Windows 7 would already have been available.

"Conventional wisdom has been that organizations need to wait for the first Service Pack to ship before they deploy a new client OS. This used to be a necessity. The availability of beta software to test the new product was not as broad as it is today, and people expected the initial release to be buggy and unstable. The first Service Pack usually would ship approximately nine to 12 months after the initial OS shipment, and would usually represent

a marked improvement in stability. Today, SP1 does not represent the milestone it used to," Silver stated.

Service Pack 1 for Windows has long been regarded as a landmark of maturity, and a signal that adoption could start without the vast majority of issues affecting the RTM release. Nowhere was this more true than with Windows Vista, although Microsoft did its best to convince customers of the contrary. However, Windows 7 is Windows 6.1 to Vista (Windows 6.0), or a Vista Release 2 (R2) if you will. Even in Beta, Windows 7 does not deal, by any measure, with the same hardware and software incompatibility issues, stability hiccups and performance problems. Service Pack 1 is expected to drop anywhere from nine to 12 months after Windows 7 RTM. This puts the potential deadline of Windows 7 SP1 sometime by the end of 2010, early 2011.