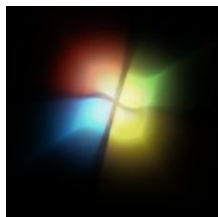


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Windows 7
Microsoft

[Windows 7 pre-RTM Builds 7227, 7229, 7231 - 140 Screenshot Gallery](#)

Still labeled Release Candidate

The week of June 8th deserves by all means a spot in the front row of Windows 7 infamous leak spectacle. No less than three builds of the next iteration of the Windows client have been leaked into the wild and can now be downloaded from illegal third party sources, including torrent trackers. Of course, the development milestones in question, namely Builds 7227, 7229 and 7231, are also available through Microsoft's official channels, just not to the general public. Still, members of the Technology Adoption Program and company partner testers are doing a superb job when it comes down to leaking Windows 7 interim builds that the company is serving for private test driving.

One aspect worth nothing from the get go is that, although Windows 7 is getting [closer and closer to RTM](#), the latest leaked builds continue to be referred to as [Release Candidate](#). The practice is not new, as Microsoft did the same when it was transitioning the platform from [Beta Build 7000 to RC Build 7100](#). Undoubtedly, the Redmond company will drop the Release Candidate label in upcoming builds, indicating that Windows 7 RTM code signoff is about to follow. But for the time being the End User License Agreements accompanying Windows 7 Builds 7227, 7229, and 7231 are all pointing to the Release Candidate of the operating system.

And yes, the Betta fish background is still the first thing that end users will get to see after the first boot. It will be interesting to see whether Microsoft will keep the Betta fish wallpaper even in the RTM build of Windows 7, since it is designed to reflect the operating system's ongoing development process. Still, myself, and I suspect that others as well, have had the Betta fish grow on us. Maybe with a tad of a photographic or otherwise artistic upgrade it could make it in the gold version of Windows 7.

Microsoft is targeting the second half of July for the RTM of Windows 7. And once it will be released to manufacturing, users will need to exercise their patience for almost three more months. Windows 7 general availability has been scheduled for October 22, 2009.

Installing Windows 7 Build 7229

I'm starting off with Build 7229 since it's the only Windows 7 build out of the three leaked this week that comes packaged as an ISO image. The remaining two are delivered as VHD (Virtual Hard Disk) images designed to be tested as guest operating systems inside a virtual machine. In this regard, Windows 7 build 7229 is the only release of the three that users will actually get to install from scratch. And this time around there is even a change compared to the [Windows 7 Build 7201](#) for example.

I don't know if any of you still remember earlier pre-RC builds of Windows 7. The installation process at that time involved a phase in which end users were invited to configure HomeGroup, a feature of the operating system that seamlessly bridges all computers in a household. Windows 7 Release Candidate Build 7100 and later no longer featured this step when it came down the deployment process. With Windows 7 Build 7229, but also with 7227 and 7231, the stage is back; right after users get to select the networking location of the computer and before the operating system will finalize all settings. Otherwise

the installation process is the same as for previous releases of Windows 7 pre-RTM.

Windows 7 Build 7229

Immediately after Windows 7 Build 7229 was leaked there were claims that because of the proximity to the RTM-Escrow build the development milestone could no longer be activated by the product keys offered to the public for Beta and RC. These claims are false. As you can see from the screenshots included below, I activated Windows 7 Build 7229 using one of the [RC keys](#) offered by Microsoft, and the process was as smooth as possible. Following this step, I went on to change the RC product key with [one offered for the Beta Build 7000](#) of the operating system. Again, Windows 7 Build 7000 activated with no issues whatsoever.

Otherwise, nothing new with Windows 7 Build 7229. If you are running Windows 7 RC Build 7100 you might as well stick with that and save yourselves the trouble of installing a fresh release just to have a new build string watermark in the right hand side corner. Undoubtedly Microsoft is tweaking the operating system on its way to RTM, but the evolution isn't visible on the surface. If you don't know where to hunt for specific bug fixes or for minute details being optimized then you are bound not to notice anything different.

Windows 7 Build 7231

[Windows 7 Build 7231](#) was leaked virtually concomitantly with Build 7229, and they both belong to the winmain development branch. The build comes with the following info: CRC: 5710D7DF; MD5: E11D5A0BE7EC9379141A07F831DE87ED; SHA1: D6315A1D8D89D30D7EA948AD93D572203D155193. But unlike 7229, this one is only available in the 32-bit flavor and only as a VHD image. Build 7229 comes as both 32-bit and 64-bit ISO images. There's no telling at this point in time which will be the build string for the RTM milestone of Windows 7, but judging from the latest leaks it will be higher than 7230. Reports indicate that Microsoft is making its way to 7300 for the RTM of Windows 7.

Because Windows 7 Build 7231 comes as a VHD image, users will have to go through a setup process. Unlike the fully fledged installation, the initial steps feature black-and-white graphics and are extremely similar to the experience of configuring Windows 7 Build 7227. In order to get a taste of the Windows 7 Build 7231 setup and OS, browse through the screenshots below.

Windows 7 Build 7227 with Service Pack 1

Unlike Build 7229 and 7231, [Windows 7 Build 7227](#) does not belong to the winmain development branch. Instead, Build 7227 is being built under the winmain_sp branch tree and, as such, it comes to the table with Service Pack 1. Yes, I know it's absolutely strange for Microsoft to be developing the first service pack for Windows 7 over a month before the platform is to be released to manufacturing. As I've said in the past, I contacted the company and asked for an explanation, but got a "no comment" answer. So my best guess is that the software giant is testing the architecture of the operating system from the get go for the integration of SP1.

Windows Vista users can easily remember that, at the start of 2008, Microsoft released a number of updates that were pre-requisites for the installation of Service Pack 1. Perhaps with Windows 7 the company is trying to avoid going through a similar process, and is putting all the details in place even before the operating system is released to manufacturing. Either way, Windows 7 Build 7227 features SP1 already installed.

If you have a better insight on why Microsoft is building Windows 7 with SP1 ahead of RTM, or on the RTM itself, please share the information via comments.