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## [Windows XP SP3 Fails to Install on XP Copies with Altered Kernels](#)

*A problem that dates back all the way to XP SP1*

Windows XP  
Microsoft

**Windows XP Service Pack 3** has been lingering on the immediate horizon since Windows Vista Service Pack 1 was released to manufacturing on February 4, 2008. At the beginning of April 2008, the third and final service pack for Windows XP is yet to be made available to end users. At the same time, Microsoft is addressing error reports of failed installations of XP SP3 due to copies of the XP operating system with altered kernels. "When you try to install a Windows XP service pack on a computer, you may receive an error message that resembles the following: 'Windows has detected that one or more protected core system files (kernel) on your computer have been modified. The Service Pack contains updated versions of those files, which work to provide a stable environment for your programs. Due to this modification, the Service Pack will not be installed'," [Microsoft revealed](#). This is nothing new for the Redmond company, in fact it is a problem that is dating back to the release of the first service pack for Windows XP. The issue is intimately connected with scenarios in which the core of the operating system is modified resulting in XP SP3 failing to install. Microsoft explained that the issue is related to third-party programs such as BootXP and LogonUI Boot Randomizer. "This behavior may occur if the computer has a modified version of the Ntoskrnl.exe file that uses the /KERNEL switch in the Boot.ini file. This condition may exist because the computer has a third-party program installed that customizes the graphics that are displayed when your computer starts," the company informed, also pointing out the steps that need to be taken in order to resolve the problem. "Click Start, click Run, type appwiz.cpl, and then click OK. Click the program that customizes the startup graphics, and then click Remove. Restart the computer, and then try to install the service pack again. If the problem persists, go to step, on the desktop, right-click My Computer, and then click Properties. Click the Advanced tab, and then click Settings under Startup and Recovery. Under System Startup, click Edit. The Boot.ini file opens in Notepad. Locate and then delete the /KERNEL= switch. Save and then close the Boot.ini file. Restart the computer. Try to install the Windows XP service pack," read the instructions from Microsoft. Editing the Boot.ini file will indeed resolve the issue, but this will not help with the modified Ntoskrnl.exe file. However, when the users will attempt to reinstall XP SP3, they will receive a message informing them that the old Ntoskrnl.exe file will be updated. Microsoft did indicate in the past that Windows client and server platforms were moving toward a new strategy of synchronized releases, but this only involved Vista and Windows Server 2008. As a consequence, Windows XP SP3 is yet to be finalized and made available to the general public. For now, Windows XP Service Pack 3 Release Candidate 2 Refresh can be downloaded from [here](#).