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[Windows XP SP3 RC - From Registry Hacks to Torrent Websites](#)

Just drop a public version already!

The [Release Candidate for Windows XP Service Pack 3](#) is the latest testing milestone of the refresh made available by Microsoft. With Windows XP introduced all the way in 2001, a total of six years later, Microsoft is still hammering away at the operating system. By all counts, XP took a much necessary turn for the better with the introduction of Service Pack 2 at the end of 2004. Jim Allchin, the former Co-President of the Platforms & Services Division, considered XP SP2 a new operating system onto itself, and not just a service pack. And the fact of the matter is that judging strictly by the evolution synonymous with SP2, the refresh was more than a standard service pack, and in this context, a unique instance in the long Microsoft tradition of service packs. While [Windows XP SP3](#) will by no means be a repeat of SP3, its release is much anticipated, and at the same time long overdue. Following a series of delays that pushed XP SP3 back from 2006 to 2007 and then all the way to 2008, Microsoft seems finally set on an availability date targeting the first half of the coming year. And the Redmond company is actually putting its money where its mouth is, having released development milestones of XP SP3 alongside those for Windows Vista SP1. The RC for XP SP3 dropped at the end of the past week in tandem with the Preview RC for Vista SP1. In less than a week, Windows XP SP3 Release Candidate, namely Build 2600.xpsp.071030-1537: Service Pack 3, v.3244 is already available for all via peer-to-peer file sharing networks. Well, if you are like me you wouldn't touch a torrent of XP SP3 with a ten foot pole, but at the same time there is another alternative, even harder to resist - a script delivered by Microsoft for its 15,000 testers of XP SP3 RC, that introduces a registry key allowing access to the beta build was leaked and is delivered as a [hack permitting any user of XP to grab the Release Candidate](#). Microsoft did promise that it will extend the testing pool of XP SP3, but perhaps such a move is also already overdue...