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Windows XP
Microsoft

[Windows XP SP3 Release Candidate \(RC\) 2](#)

On the way to the final version of XP SP3

Holding your breath while waiting for the final version of [Windows XP Service Pack 3](#) won't do you any good. In fact, you can go ahead and exhale now, because Microsoft is by no means in any hurry to make available the third and final service pack for Windows XP. However, the Redmond company is indeed hammering away at XP SP3, having released a new build of the service pack. While the gold bits of XP SP3 have failed to take a consistent contour on the immediate horizon, although it seemed that Windows Vista SP1 RTM would be synonymous with the releasing to manufacturing of the third service pack for XP, Microsoft confirmed a new development milestone. Having released Vista SP1 and Windows Server 2008 to manufacturing on February 4, 2008, the Redmond company managed to keep everything quiet on the XP SP3 front. Still, just three days later, on February 7, Microsoft's selected pool of testers, some 15,000 strong, received the bits for Windows XP SP3 Release Candidate (RC) 2. Considering the install base of XP, approximately 75% of all the operating system users in the world, XP SP3 is bound to deliver a larger impact than Vista SP1. Still, for Microsoft, the priority was the service pack for its latest Windows client, as well as the finalization of Windows Server 2008. The first public release of XP SP3 was in late December 2007, with XP SP3 RC Refresh 1 and [XP SP3 RC Refresh 2](#) having dropped in January 2008. Now, XP SP3 RC 2 is available only as a private testing milestone, as a Microsoft representative revealed to [Mary Jo Foley](#), with no public release in sight. "We released Windows XP SP3 RC 2 to private beta testers. This release catches the build up on previously released hotfixes and responds to critical feedback from previous betas. We are targeting 1H 2008 for the release of XP SP3 RTM, though our timing will always be based on customer feedback as a first priority," the Microsoft representative stated.