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[Windows XP Service Pack 3 Release Candidate](#)

Goes to testers

[Windows XP Service Pack 3](#) Release Candidate build is live. Microsoft is hammering away at the third and final service pack for Windows XP, and is making consistent headway in the matter. Truth be told, since the 2004 availability of XP SP2, and after the numerous delays of SP3 across 2006 and 2007, Service Pack 3 is long overdue. But at the same time, the refresh is getting closer and closer at a fast pace. Microsoft has in fact synchronized the development milestones of Windows Server 2008, formerly codenamed Longhorn, Windows Vista Service Pack 1 and Windows XP SP3. The third service pack for XP was initially introduced as a Beta preview version concomitantly with Windows Vista SP1 pre-Beta in mid July 2007. Ever since that point, Vista SP1 and XP SP3 have been joined at the hip. In this regard, Vista SP1 moved into Beta stage at the end of September 2007, with XP SP3 Beta following closely behind in early October. Last week, Microsoft opened up the test driving process of Vista SP1 with a preview of the first Release Candidate to the service pack shipping to approximately 15,000 testers. At the same time, the company indicated that a fresh build of Windows XP SP3 was not that far behind. Well, Microsoft in fact managed to provide official confirmation that a Release Candidate of Windows XP SP3 has also been made available to testers. According to the Redmond company, the same 15,000 testers that have been given access to Vista SP1 RC are also able to access XP SP3 RC. At the same time, Microsoft promised that it will broaden the beta testing of XP SP3 in the future but failed to provide the actual date when it plans to do so. Unlike the latest testing build of Windows Vista SP1, the latest version of XP SP3 is not a preview, but the actual release Candidate. The final version of XP SP3 is planned for the first half of 2008.