

5 June 2008

By: Marius Oiaga, Technology News Editor

[XP Roadmap: From SP3 to Windows 7, to 2010](#)

And beyond

Windows XP
Microsoft

Even with Windows Vista Service Pack 1 available and with Windows 7 planned for release by the end of 2009 (according to Microsoft Chief Executive Officer Steve Ballmer), Windows XP is still far from taking its due place in the Windows cemetery. The June 30, 2008 Direct OEM and Retail License Availability (end date) has without a doubt caused more stir among Windows users than it's worth, especially since XP is going to be around well off into the next decade. On June 30, Microsoft will simply start serving new copies of XP to retail channel partners and original equipment manufacturers (with a few exceptions discussed below). As a direct consequence, retail outlets will no longer sell boxed copies of XP, while OEMs will no longer preload the operating system on new computers. In this regard, the entire focus will fall onto Windows Vista SP1. However, customers will still be able to buy Windows XP until January 31, 2009 from System Builders. That is to say, for another half a year, System Builders will continue to sell Vista's predecessor without any problems. Furthermore, consumers in emerging markets will have the opportunity to buy Windows XP Starter Edition until June 30, 2010, because Microsoft needs to fend off the adoption of Linux on low-cost machines. But there's more: "as of April 2008, Microsoft is extending availability of Windows XP Home Edition for OEMs to install on Ultra Low-Cost PCs. The new OEM end date will be the later of either June 30, 2010, or one year after the general availability of the next version of Windows," Microsoft reveals on the official Windows Life-Cycle Policy [webpage](#). And the fact of the matter is that Windows XP Home will be available to OEMs until either June 30, 2010, or one year after the delivery of Windows 7, whichever comes first, not only on ultra-low-cost mobile computers, but also on ultra-low-cost desktops. This scenario is valid for both emerging and developed markets. On May 6, 2008, Microsoft made available to the general public the last service pack for Windows XP. Service Pack 3 does not by any means impact any of the deadlines already imposed for the operating system. But, most importantly, it does not affect support. Mainstream support for XP SP3 will be retired on April 14, 2009, while the Extended support phase will only end on April 8, 2014. Windows XP Service Pack 2 will continue to be supported only until July 13, 2010. This means that XP will continue to be around for no less than six years...