

By [Amal Diaga](#), Technology News Editor

## [XP SP3 RC2 Refresh Leaves Vista SP1 RTM in the Dust](#)

### *In terms of performance*

The face-off between Windows XP and Windows Vista is by no means over, quite on the contrary in fact, it simply managed to turn a new leaf with the introduction of the service packs for the two operating systems. Microsoft dismissed early [XP SP3](#) vs. Vista SP1 comparisons as irrelevant due to the fact that they were focused on two products still in beta stage. However, now with Windows Vista SP1 released to manufacturing on February 4, and to the general public on March 18, 2008, the [CRN Test Center](#) threw the gold version of Vista SP1 against the latest Beta build of XP SP3. And the third and final service pack for Windows XP still managed to come on top, even if it is yet to be finished. Windows XP SP3 Release Candidate 2 Refresh Build 5508 and Windows Vista SP1 gold were compared while installed on HP rp5700 machines featuring 160 GB SATA hard disks, 1.8 GHz dual-core Intel and 1 GB of system memory. The final version of Vista SP1 failed to measure up to the still-in-beta XP SP3, despite the RC2 label. The CRN Test Center found that XP SP3 RC2 Refresh brought to the table a measurable performance advantage over the RTM version of Vista SP1. With both operating systems running just the benchmarking solutions and OpenOffice, XP SP3 booted in just 35 seconds, while Vista SP1 took a couple of seconds short of 1 minute to start. Of course in real life scenarios, where the users have additional items set to launch at start-up, these boot times will be considerably larger. Vista SP1 did manage to outperform XP SP3 in a single aspect, it copied a 1.25 GB file from a network share in just 2 minutes and 29 seconds. It took XP SP3 an additional 15 seconds to complete the task. But as far as performance and memory usage are concerned, the Primate Labs' Geekbench test clearly indicated that XP SP3 was on top of Vista SP1, with a score of 2052.6, over 1994.0. Furthermore, the Windows Aero UI and associated eye candy contribute to making Vista slower than XP. With Aero disabled, Vista SP1 RTM scored 2018.2, but still less than XP SP3. After Windows Vista SP1 was released to manufacturing in February, Microsoft commissioned a benchmarking study to Principled Technologies. The comparison between Vista SP1 and XP SP2, not SP3, delivered a [sad conclusion](#) - the fact that Vista SP1 and XP SP2 "performed comparably on most test operations." Of course Microsoft explains this as a natural stage in the evolution of the hardware infrastructure versus the operating systems. Windows Vista Service Pack 1 Five Language Standalone for both 32-bit and 64-bit versions of the operating system is available for download [HERE](#). Windows XP Service Pack 3 Release Candidate 2 Refresh can be downloaded from [here](#).