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[XP SP3 and Vista SP1 Will Own Linux-Free Desktops until Windows 7](#)

And beyond

Even though with the advent of Windows Vista the open source community saw the ripe moment for Linux to strengthen its grip over consumer PCs, the fact of the matter is that Windows still holds a firm grip over the vast majority of desktops worldwide. And there is no change visible on the horizon, especially as the two largest vendors of Linux operating systems have no plans to go against Microsoft. Neither Novell nor Red Hat feel that Linux has sufficient driving force behind it in order to go against Windows, which until Windows 7 will largely be represented by Windows XP Service Pack 3 and Windows Vista SP1. Novell President and CEO Ronald Hovsepian, revealed to [InformationWorld](#) that SUSE Linux will fail to become popular until Windows 7, and even beyond. The immediate reason for this is the slow pace at which the Linux consumer market is growing. "The market for the desktop for the next three to five years is mainly enterprise-related," Hovsepian explained. As a direct consequence, Novell is focusing the bulk of its efforts on winning over corporate desktops and technology enthusiasts. But Novell's perspective is shared by [Red Hat](#). "We have no plans to create a traditional desktop product for the consumer market in the foreseeable future," stated the Red Hat Desktop Team. With neither Novell nor Red Hat making a move against Windows, Vista SP1 and XP SP3 are bound to have an easy ride in the upcoming years. And if the situation perpetuates itself, Windows 7 will also not have much of a challenge from Linux, either. "An explanation: as a public, for-profit company, Red Hat must create products and technologies with an eye on the bottom line, and with desktops this is much harder to do than with servers. The desktop market suffers from having one dominant vendor, and some people still perceive that today's Linux desktops simply don't provide a practical alternative. Of course, a growing number of technically savvy users and companies have discovered that today's Linux desktop is indeed a practical alternative. Nevertheless, building a sustainable business around the Linux desktop is tough, and history is littered with example efforts that have either failed outright, are stalled or are run as charities," the Red Hat Desktop Team added. Red Hat is pushing the open source operating system via Red Hat Enterprise Linux Desktop, Fedora and Red Hat Global Desktop. But all these desktop products are aimed at a niche of customers, mainly in corporate environments. One company that did go straight against Microsoft and Windows is Canonical. The Ubuntu distribution of Linux is slowly making its presence felt, but at just a superficial level at this point.