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Windows XP
Microsoft

[XP Survives Past Vista, and Onward to Windows 7](#)

Downgrade rights extended until July 31, 2009

[Windows XP](#) is a survivor. The operating system launched at the end of 2001 is still alive and kicking despite Microsoft's best efforts to the contrary. The Redmond giant confirmed at the end of the past week that it had breathed additional life into Windows XP despite having Windows Vista available for almost two years now, and Windows 7 at approximately half way through its development process. Microsoft has extended the period in which corporate customers can still buy, and OEMs can still sell, Windows XP via the Windows Vista downgrade rights, with an additional six months past the initially planned cut-off date that was January 31, 2009.

"As more customers make the move to Windows Vista, we want to make sure that they are making that transition with confidence and that it is as smooth as possible. Providing downgrade media for a few more months is part of that commitment, as is the Windows Vista Small Business Assurance program (available in the U.S. only), which provides 1-on-1, customized support for our small business customers," a Microsoft spokesperson revealed to [Mary Jo Foley](#) confirming the details made public by [The Register](#).

Although enterprise customers still buy Windows Vista licenses, the downgrade rights allow them to deploy and run [Windows XP](#), until they are ready to make the jump to Vista. Now OEMs will be able to offer XP along Vista until July 31, 2009. In this context, Windows XP might in fact live long enough to catch the RTM of Windows 7, but definitely long past the pre-Beta and Beta builds due by the end of this year. Microsoft has discontinued the availability of Windows XP via retail and OEM channels starting the end of June 2008, with the exception of licenses for ultra-low-cost laptops and desktops. Microsoft Chief Executive Officer Steve Ballmer recently announced that the company sold over 180 million licenses of Windows Vista, but did not disclose how many customers exercised their downgrade rights.

"What's changing is Microsoft is giving six more months where it will provide downgrade media for XP Professional for OEMs and system builders to provide to their customers who purchase Windows Vista Ultimate and Business editions - (which the company figures will be) largely going to be small businesses since that's the audience that would want/use XP Pro. So it's the same old downgrade right thing that was in the EULA (End User License Agreement) before; it's just Microsoft is providing the media to partners a few months more. The same caveat with providing the downgrade media as before applies, which is OEMs and system builders don't have to do so if they don't want - it's their business decision to make," the Microsoft representative added.