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[You Don't Need Vista SP1 and XP SP3! Windows Server 2008 \(Longhorn\) Is a Desktop Super Platform](#)

The true Longhorn!

Microsoft is hard at work cooking the third and final service pack for Windows XP. On top of this, the Redmond company has released to manufacturing Windows Vista SP1. But what if you don't want [Vista, SP1 or no SP1](#), what if you are tired and bored with all that XP has to offer and are still looking for an alternative? You could wait until late 2009, early 2010, for Windows 7, the successor of Windows Vista, and you could even switch to Mac OS X and Linux. But at the same time, there is yet another alternative for you - Windows Server 2008, formerly codenamed Longhorn. Microsoft released Windows Server 2008 to manufacturing on the same day as Windows Vista SP1, namely February 4, but despite of being a server operating system, it can also be used as a super desktop operating system. After all, it's all Windows Vista at the core, anyway. And the users that have been running Windows Server 2003, instead of Windows XP, already got a taste of what it would be to utilize Windows Server 2008 as a desktop OS. "Windows Server 2008 is the best OS to be released till date from Microsoft's stable. And the moment I got hold of the RTM build I could not resist installing it on my workstation. Due to the nature of my work I always prefer running a Server OS on my main workstation... I have been running Windows 2003 disguised as XP (with all the themes and stuff) all these days," revealed [Vijayshinva Karnure](#), from Microsoft in India. Karnure described in ten quick steps the best way to effectively transform Windows Server 2008 into an equivalent of Vista, and forget about Vista SP1 and Windows XP SP3. First off, you will have to enable Hardware Virtualization in order to run Hyper-V. This can be done via the BIOS setup. Enabling Hyper-V is rather simple, you just have to add the following server role Server Manager > Roles > Hyper-V. Windows Server 2008 does come complete with the Windows Aero graphical user interface. But for this, you will need the necessary drivers. At least in theory, the Vista Graphics and Audio drivers will also fit Windows Server 2008, if the server OS is not supported specifically by the hardware manufacturers. "The Desktop Experience Feature enables a bunch of stuff that is by default present on a desktop OS. Most importantly it includes Themes, Windows Media player and the Aero related features. You will have to enable it from the Server Manager. The 'Turn Windows features on or off' / 'Add remove windows components' has all been rolled into the Server Manager now. Server Manager > Features > Desktop Experience. Installing the Desktop Experience feature does not enable them. You have to manually set them up," Karnure explained. Services.MSC > Themes will permit you to enable themes in Windows Server 2008. All you have to do is configure the start-up type to Automatic and then make your way to Control Panel > Personalization > Theme and choose Windows Aero. In the same manner, turn on search via Server Manager > Roles > File Services > Windows Search. This will require that you add the File Services Role via Server Manager. "Since I am using it as a workstation I do not want to keep a track of all the Shutdowns. The Shutdown Event Tracker is the pop up that you get asking you for a shutdown reason. To disable it open mmc.msc, add the Group Policy snap-in, under Administrative Templates expand System and set Display Shutdown Event Tracer to Disabled," Karnure said. Through Services.msc > Windows Audio you can set the startup type to Automatic, and in this manner enable the Windows Audio service. Now, with display drivers and audio drivers installed, you will be able to enjoy all that Windows Server 2008 has to offer. Just look for a little codec package on the web, a Vista-ready one should do and install it for support for additional media formats. "As a workstation, enabling SuperFetch will give you that additional bit of responsiveness. The SuperFetch services is disabled by default and when you try to enable it you will most likely get an error message 'The operating system is not presently configured to run this application'. You will have to make two registry changes to enable this service. I basically copied them over from my Vista machine. HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE - SYSTEM - CurrentControlSet - Control - Session Manager - Memory Management - PrefetchParameters. EnablePrefetcher DWORD 3. EnableSuperfetch DWORD 3," Karnure explained. The best thing about Windows Server 2008? Well, the fact that you will be able to run it for free, during the evaluation period, for no less than 240 days, by [rearming it once every 60 days](#).