

Windows XP outshines Vista in benchmarking test

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New tests have revealed that Windows XP with the beta Service Pack 3 has twice the performance of Vista, even with its long-awaited Service Pack 1.

Vista's first service pack, to be released early next year, is intended to boost the operating system's performance. However, when Vista with the Service Pack 1 (SP1) beta was put through benchmark testing by researchers at Florida-based software development company Devil Mountain Software, the improvement was not overwhelming, leaving the latest Windows iteration outshined by its predecessor.

Vista, both [with and without SP1](#), performed notably slower than XP with SP3 in the test, taking over 80 seconds to complete the test, compared to the beta SP3-enhanced XP's 35 seconds.

Vista's performance with the service pack increased less than 2 percent compared to performance without SP1--much lower than XP's SP3 improvement of 10 percent. The tests, run on a Dell XPS M1710 test bed with a 2GHz Core 2 Duo CPU and 1GB of RAM, put Microsoft Office 2007 through a set of productivity tasks, including creating a compound document and supporting workbooks and presentation materials.

In response to the test, a Microsoft spokesperson said in a statement that although the company understood the interest in the service packs, they are "still in development" and will continue to evolve before their release. "It has always been our goal to deliver service packs that meet the full spectrum of customer needs," the spokesperson said.

If SP1 does not evolve sufficiently, it could be [another setback for Vista](#), with many businesses [waiting to adopt the operating system](#) until the service pack is released.

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A year after its launch, only 13 percent of businesses have adopted Vista, according to a survey of IT professionals.

Microsoft admits that the launch has not gone as well as the company would have liked. "Frankly, the world wasn't 100 percent ready for Windows Vista," corporate vice president Mike Sievert said in a recent interview at Microsoft's partner conference in Denver.

Microsoft has not done enough to make users aware of the benefits of Vista, NPD analyst Chris Swenson said at the conference. "The problem is that there are a lot of complex new features in Vista, and you need to educate consumers about them...much like Apple educating the masses about the possibilities of the iPhone or focusing on a single feature or benefit of the Mac OS in the Mac-versus-PC commercials. Microsoft should be educating the masses about the various new features in a heavy rotation of Vista in TV, radio, and print ads. But the volume of ads (for Vista) has paled in comparison to the ads run for XP."

XP has proved to be more popular than its younger sibling, with the first six months of U.S. retail sales of box copies of Vista 59.7 percent below those of XP's in the equivalent period after its release.

Microsoft has had to allow PC manufacturers [to continue to sell XP](#) on new PCs, setting a deadline for the last sale at January 31. However, the pressure from manufacturers and consumers has been so great that Microsoft has been forced to extend the deadline another five months, until June.

According to Microsoft, sales of Vista have been picking up, with the software giant reporting 88 million units sold.

Suzanne Tindal of [ZDNet Australia](#) reported from Sydney. CNET News.com's Ina Fried contributed to this article.

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