Support is ending for popular Windows service pack
## 77% of organizations need to take action

Purpose of research note

Microsoft has announced that users running Windows XP Service Pack 2 will not receive security updates after July 13, 2010, in accordance with its Service Pack Support Policy. Given the operating system's enduring popularity – 90% of analyzed computers still have Windows XP installed – this move has widespread implications on the security and management of public and corporate IT environments. The purpose of this research note is to illustrate the size, significance and impact of this change.

Summary of issue

Microsoft is ending support for Windows XP SP2 users starting July 13, 2010. The date was established when Windows XP Service Pack 3 (SP3) was released on April 21, 2008. Microsoft has stated that Windows XP SP2 users will be allowed to access Microsoft online Knowledge Base articles, FAQs and troubleshooting tools, but paid support and security updates will no longer be available. Windows XP Service Pack 2 users have the option of downloading the Service Pack 3 software package from Microsoft's support site if they want to continue receiving security updates. Microsoft will also terminate support for Windows Vista RTM and Windows Server 2000 on the same date.

Key Findings
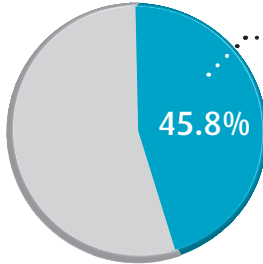
Computers running Windows XP SP2 — 45.8%
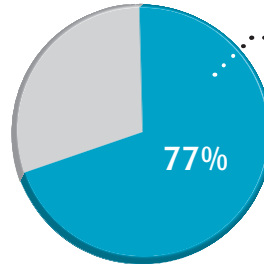
Organizations that require action (>10% of PCs on XP SP2) — 77%

- 278,498 computers from 117 organizations were inventoried between January and June 2010
- 127,498 (45.8%) of computers are running Windows XP SP2
- Within the average organization, 36% of computers run SP2 and require updating
- Of all organizations within the sample, 77% should take action (defined as 10% or more of computers running SP2)

What does it mean when a service pack is retired?

An unsupported version of Windows will no longer receive software updates from Windows Update. These include security updates that can help protect computers from harmful viruses, spyware and other malicious software. Windows Update also installs the latest software updates to improve the reliability of Windows, including new drivers for hardware and more. Customers require a supported service pack to receive security updates, hotfixes or assisted support from Microsoft Customer Service & Support.

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What is in Windows XP SP3?

Windows XP SP3 includes all previously released updates for the operating system. The update also includes a small number of new functionalities, which do not significantly change customers' experience with the operating system.

What is extended support and how long does it run for Windows XP?

Extended Support includes paid support (charged on an hourly basis or per incident), security update support at no additional cost, and paid hotfix support. To receive hotfix support, an Extended Hotfix Support contract must be purchased within the first 90 days following the end of the Mainstream Support phase. Microsoft will not accept requests for warranty support, design changes, or new features during the Extended Support phase. Microsoft's Extended Support for XP runs until April 8, 2014, at which point the operating system will be retired completely. At that point, the operating system will be approaching 13 years in age.

> **NOTE:** There is no SP3 for the 64-bit version of Windows XP. Customers running the 64-bit version of Windows XP with SP2 have the latest service pack and will continue to be eligible for support and receive updates until April 8, 2014.

Data collection

The data collection for this report was made possible through Softchoice's award-winning IT assessment services. To provide comprehensive IT asset management services, including licensing gap analysis, hardware lifecycle and IT policy management, Softchoice receives detailed IT inventory data from organizations. A portion of this data was analyzed in aggregate to produce the findings pertaining to Windows XP installations among North American organizations.

Contact Information

Eric Gardiner
Manager of Communications
416.588.9002 Ext. 2358
eric.gardiner@softchoice.com

Dean Williams
Services Development Manager
416.588.9002 Ext. 2231
dean.williams@softchoice.com

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