

## Session # 7 - NOTES

### What's up with Vista SP1 and XP SP3?

**QUESTION** – I've been hearing horror stories about Microsoft's latest service packs. I have computers running both XP and Vista. Should I get VistaSP1? Do I need XP SP3? I don't even know what these updates are for! Can you help me out?

**KIM KOMANDO ANSWER** -- Windows updates are often shrouded in mystery. You check Windows Update. It tells you updates are available. You click Install and forget about it.

Often, we take the recommended updates without a lot of questions. But service packs are a different animal. These aren't small security patches. They're huge, and they often promise big changes to your system.

VistaSP1 delivers well over 500 updates. XP SP3 includes a whopping 1,174 updates. Those numbers look scary, but you've already got most of the updates. Service packs include every previous update for the operating system. They do not include many new updates.

**This ensures you get caught up on all the important updates.** But even with all those updates, you won't see a big change. These service packs do a lot of work under the hood. But they won't really affect how you interface with the computer.

Let me go over each service pack in a little more detail. I think it's important to understand what you're getting and why. I'll also go over horror stories you might have heard.

#### Vista SP1

As I said, SP1 has over 500 updates. I couldn't possibly cover all of them here. Nor would I want to. You would get bored very quickly. But if you're curious, [a list of updates](#) is available.

**The updates fall into three categories – hardware support, usability and security.** There are updates that don't fit neatly into those categories. But think of them as smoothing out Vista's rough edges.

**Some users that upgraded to Vista found that some devices didn't work. SP1 helps with device compatibility. It also lays the groundwork for devices you may not own yet. Vista will better identify and support Blu-ray Disc drives.** SP1 also adds support for new Windows Media Center Extenders.

SP1 fixes some issues with Vista's usability. The annoying User Account Control prompts have been reduced. The Windows Genuine Advantage kill switch is removed. Microsoft won't cripple non-genuine copies of Vista. **Some users found long delays when logging on and resuming from hibernation. These wait times have been reduced.**

**The service pack also fixes a number of security holes.** It includes every security update since the launch of Vista. It also improves some existing security features. For example, the BitLocker hard drive encryption has been strengthened.

## Getting SP1

The release of Vista SP1 hasn't been blemish free. It accounts for most of the horror stories. But when you look at them, the stories aren't that horrific. There are ways to fix the most common problems.

**Many people simply aren't offered SP1.** This can be pretty confusing. The service pack doesn't show up in Windows Update. And there isn't much explanation.

**Several things can cause this.** But one accounts for a majority of people's problems. **Vista SP1 conflicts with some hardware drivers. If Windows Update detects these drivers, you aren't offered SP1.**

**The easy fix is to update those drivers.** But which drivers are we talking about? Windows Update doesn't tell you. That information is buried in the [Microsoft Knowledge Base](#). To find it, scroll down to Resolution. Then find "Method for Cause 5."

**Check for driver updates in Windows Update. These may be marked as Optional. If that doesn't resolve the problem, see the computer manufacturer's Web site. It may provide downloads for SP1 compatible drivers.**

Another problem has been performance issues after installing SP1. These too can be attributed to outdated hardware drivers. But they can also be caused by software—often security software. Be sure you have the latest versions of your firewall, antivirus and anti-spyware programs.

**Don't be scared away from SP1. The above problems are manageable. And for many people, the update goes off without a hitch.** You may have no problems at all. We're all running SP1 here in the office. And no one had problems with the update.

## XP SP3

Again, I can't cover the more than 1,000 updates in SP3.

Even with so many updates, there's not much to discuss. **SP3 mostly serves to bring your Windows XP up to date. It will give you any updates you've missed in the past.** It creates a new baseline for all XP users.

**SP3 patches new security holes. And it fixes some Windows programs and processes.** But there aren't many new additions. The ones provided are important, but not very interesting. Several have to do with network security or system encryption software. None of these will affect how you use your computer.

**One thing to watch for is Internet Explorer. SP3 updates Internet Explorer 6 and 7. If you have IE 7, you cannot uninstall it after applying SP3. You cannot go back to IE 6. Also, SP3 will not work with IE 8 beta. If you have IE 8 beta, uninstall it before installing SP3.**

### **Getting SP3**

**There have been other problems. Some people have been unable to boot their PCs. Or they get stuck in an endless reboot cycle.**

**In this case, it wasn't Microsoft's fault. This is a Hewlett-Packard issue.**

**HP sells computers with either Intel or AMD processors.** It installs the operating system using a disk image. The disk image was created on an Intel machine. It came with Intel specific drivers and registry settings.

This Intel-based disk image was installed on AMD-powered systems. There apparently were no problems until SP3 came along. After SP3 was installed, the computers tried to load the Intel drivers. Only there is no Intel processor for them to act on. The result: The computer crashes. Or, it reboots continuously.

HP has recently issued a fix for the problem. **Download HP's Upgrade Utility before installing SP3. It should prevent booting issues.**

For everyone else, it appears the SP3 update goes smoothly. You can install it through Windows Update.

### **Do some preparation**

Neither of these updates is small. Many people install them without an issue. But they have the potential to cause problems. Be sure to protect your important files.

**Before installing either service pack back up your computer. Kim recommends that you back up, at a minimum, these files:**

- **Photos, music and home video**
- **Financial statements**
- **Personal writing and art**
- **E-mail, contact list and calendar**
- **Web browser bookmarks (or Favorites)**

**You may also want to set up a restore point. Should the installation fail, you will be able to use System Restore to rescue your computer.**

## **Setting a “Restore Point” for XP & Vista**

### **Windows XP**

Click on START > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > System Restore. When the “Welcome to System Restore” screen appears select “Create a Restore Point” and then “Next”. On the following screen name your restore point and then click “Create”. You have now set a Restore Point that you can go back too, in case of a problem in downloading SP3.

### **Windows Vista**

Follow the same steps as above. However, you will end up on the “Restore System Files & Settings” screen. At the bottom of this screen click on “Open System Protection”. On the ensuing screen select the drives that you want to create a restore point for. Click “Create”.

### **Daily Tips**

There are numerous websites that provide daily tips on a variety of subjects. If you would like to have a daily computer tip you might want to consider the Kim Komando and/or Smart Computing daily tips. Kim’s site can be found at [komando.com](http://komando.com). Click on “Free Newsletters”. Not each day’s tip will be useful, but every now and then a real gem will come up. Kim also has a wealth of archived information on buying computers, digital cameras, tv’s, etc. etc. She is very knowledgeable and helpful.

Smart Computing also has a “tip of the day” and a “question of the day” submitted by a computer user needing help. Often times the question of the day is one that each of us has wondered about, and several answers are usually given. You will probably have to be a subscriber to Smart Computing to sign up for this service.

### **Google Mail**

Have you ever thought that it would be nice to have a second email account? Have you ever wished that you could keep non-personal email out of your personal email account. When you sign up for something on a website, and they want your email address as part of the sign up, wouldn’t it be nice if you had an email account especially for this type of sign up? Well, you can, it’s easy and it’s free. Google offers a great email service. It’s a quick sign up and you are on your way.

Nice part about Google email (Gmail) is that it really is a good email program. Your email is stored at Google and they offer so much storage that they claim, “You will never have to delete a message again”. They offer many amenities, and you will just have to check out their program to see what they have. Also, their virus and spam filters are some of the best. And, they move all email they

consider “junk” to a special folder and it never comes through to your inbox. You can, of course, visit the junk mail box to check what has been placed in there.

Put “gmail” into your search engine or go to Google’s home page and simply click on “more” and when the drop down menu shows, click on “even more”. That will take you to a Google page which will show all the Google products that are available. Gmail will be listed as one that is available.

## **SPYBOT S & D**

Spybot S & D removes tracking software that has been placed on your computer without your knowledge or authorization. This type of software tracks your surfing behavior which is compiled and then sold to advertising companies.

Spybot S & D has released version 1.5.2. If you are running Spybot S & D you should update to this latest version. If you do not have a “spyware” “malware” program on your computer the ComputerBooters organization highly recommends that you consider installing one, and use it at least once each month. Spybot S & D is a free program and can be downloaded at [www.spybot.com](http://www.spybot.com).

## **Ad-Aware**

Ad-Aware protects and removes spyware and adware from your computer. It will also detect Trojan horses, malware, viruses, bots, rootkits, data mining, etc. Run this program at least once each month. This program is also recommended by ComputerBooters. By the way, be sure and upgrade to Ad-Aware 2008 when it becomes available soon.

## **Windows Defender**

This is a free anti spyware program created by Microsoft and can be downloaded at [www.windowsdefender.com](http://www.windowsdefender.com). The program, which runs in the background is another tool to stop malicious spyware from infecting your computer.

## **Wikipedia**

If you are curious as to what the terms “spyware, malware, adware, rootkits”, etc. mean, and how they could effect your computer, google Wikipedia and then search a word for the definition.

## **Cookies**

Possibly one of the least understood computer terms is “Cookies”. Below is a definition of cookies as found on Wikipedia.

Cookies have been of concern for [Internet privacy](#), since they can be used for tracking browsing behavior. As a result, they have been subject to legislation in various countries such as the [United States](#) and in the [European Union](#). Cookies have also been criticized because the identification of users they provide is not always accurate and because they

could potentially be a target of network attackers. Some alternatives to cookies exist, but each has its own uses, advantages and drawbacks.

**HTTP cookies**, or more commonly referred to as Web cookies, tracking cookies or just cookies, are parcels of text sent by a server to a web client (usually a browser) and then sent back unchanged by the client each time it accesses that server. HTTP cookies are used for authenticating, session tracking (state maintenance), and maintaining specific information about users, such as site preferences or the contents of their electronic shopping carts.

Cookies are also subject to a number of misconceptions, mostly based on the erroneous notion that they are computer programs. In fact, cookies are simple pieces of data unable to perform any operation by themselves. In particular, they are neither spyware nor viruses, despite the detection of cookies from certain sites by many anti-spyware products.

Most modern browsers allow users to decide whether to accept cookies, but rejection makes some websites unusable

Allowing users to log in to a website is another use of cookies. Users typically log in by inserting their credentials into a login page; cookies allow the server to know that the user is already authenticated, and therefore is allowed to access services or perform operations that are restricted to logged-in users.

So, what we have here is a Catch – 22 situation. If we delete all the cookies we may not be able to automatically access a website that we want to see or use. If we leave the cookies on our computer we could literally have hundreds of tracking cookies watching our internet behavior. If you decide that you want to remove the cookies on your computer open your browser and click on “Tools” > “Internet Options” > “General Tab” and on XP select “Delete Cookies”. On Vista go to the “General Tab” and under “Browsing History” select “Delete”. You will then be given an option to delete five different items. Select those you want to delete.