

Microsot kills XP on Itanic

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Itanic to be high-cost low-volume chip until Intel kills it.

Shoulda kept Alpha – no porting costs, no 3 years of delays in pushing ahead with important new features the VMS engineers could have been working on.

http://www.infoworld.com/article/05/01/07/02NNitanium_1.html

Microsoft nixes XP for Itanium

Move seen as final nail in Itanium 2 for workstations coffin

By Joris Evers

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Marking the death of Itanium within workstations, Microsoft has said it will cease offering a version of Windows XP for Intel's Itanium 2 processor.

The move comes after several hardware providers ceased producing workstations with the chip. It essentially signifies the end for Itanium 2 in Windows-based workstations and comes after major hardware vendors abandoned the 64-bit chip for use in workstations.

Going forward, Microsoft will focus on processors with 64-bit extensions for use in workstations, a company spokeswoman said. After several delays, final versions of Windows for 32-bit processors with 64-bit extensions are due in the first half of this year.

"Microsoft believes Windows for Itanium-based systems is a stronger offering in the high-end server market," the spokeswoman said. "For the mainstream server and workstation markets, however, we believe we can best serve customer needs with Windows Server 2003 Standard x64 Edition and Windows XP Professional x64 Edition." Microsoft uses "x64" to indicate versions of Windows for processors with 64-bit extensions.

Workstations are high-performance desktop computers often used by designers and engineers, as well as in video production environments. Processors with 64-bit extensions, as opposed to the Itanium processor, are x86 processors that are capable of 64-bit computing and can also run applications written for the 32-bit processors used in most PCs today.

Intel supports Microsoft discontinuing Windows XP for Itanium, officially called Windows XP 64-Bit Edition Version 2003.

"We're aware of Microsoft's plans and agree with their priorities and direction," said Erica Fields, an Intel spokeswoman. "The workstation market really has never been a main focus for the Itanium. Xeon with 64-bit capabilities really provides the best overall price performance for the general workstation market."

Hewlett-Packard, the last remaining major workstation vendor to sell Itanium-based workstations, stopped selling the systems in September 2004, citing less than favorable market conditions. HP had been selling two Itanium 2-based workstation models since April 2003. Dell pulled its Itanium workstations off the market before HP did.

Because nobody was selling the software, Microsoft's retiring of Windows XP for Itanium is no great surprise, said Nathan Brookwood, principal analyst at research company Insight 64.

"It has been increasingly obvious over the past year that Itanium is moving more and more into the mid-to-high-end server space and away from low-end servers and desktops," Brookwood said.

64-bit processors offer users greater computing power, as systems process more data per clock cycle and use more memory. Advanced Micro Devices' Athlon64 and Opteron processors, as well as Intel's Xeon processors, currently support 64-bit extensions.