

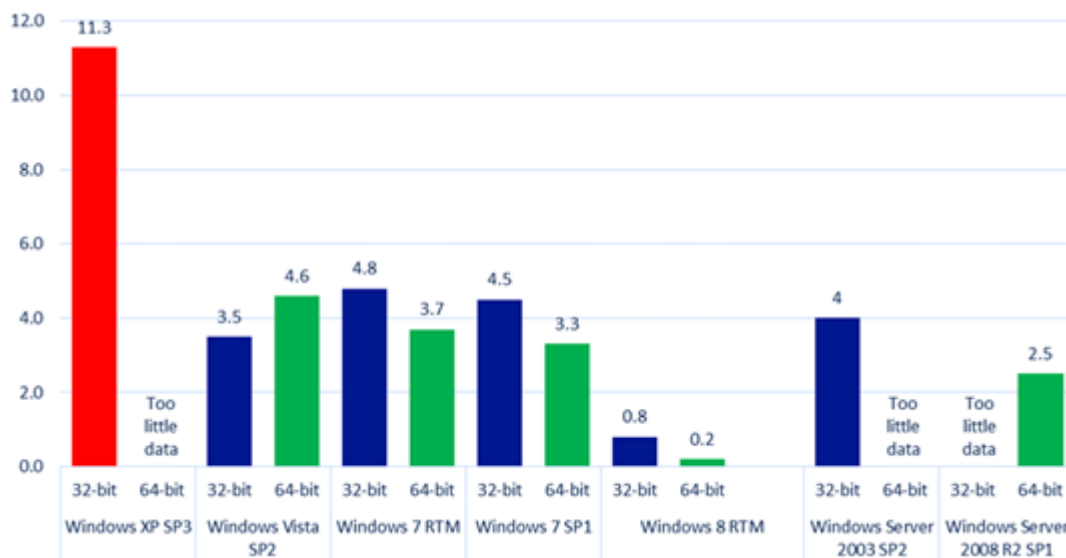
## “XP” BITES THE DUST



Barring a corporate directive, April 8, 2014 is the “burial” date for Microsoft’s long-running and beloved Windows XP operating system. This means that as of this date users who are currently using XP Service Pack 3 (SP3) will no longer receive security updates, hot-fixes, or any type of support and technical content help. In layman’s terms this means that any new threats not previously correctible by Microsoft’s system will leave it open to trouble. Since a large part of the PC-world has been dependent for years on XP, obviously it’s a big deal, such that many users have already migrated to Windows 7 or 8.

Why should XP users be concerned? Attackers and hackers already know many of XP’s vulnerabilities and have managed to breach security barriers. When Microsoft releases a security update, these internet bad guys can often reverse-engineer the update, identify the vulnerability and come up with a code to attack the area not covered by the update; basically, they find the loophole and fill it! It takes about a month to penetrate the system from the time Microsoft issues updates. For example, these technical bandits were able to affect 45 Microsoft security updates between July 2012 and July 2013. Yes, there are anti-virus systems that help block these attacks and are trustworthy, but the problem is that after April 8<sup>th</sup> the user will not know if their entire computing base is still intact or if they are being compromised in spite of their anti-virus programs; in other words, the user’s confidence level will severely drop and for many people that is unacceptable. Even though XP’s Service Pack 3 was adequate years ago when it was developed, times and methods have changed and tech specialists have seen that the infection rate for XP is much higher than either Windows 7 or 8 systems, allowing for the difference in time that each system has been in operation. Modern threats and entry techniques are quite different from those when SP3 was launched, hence their inadequacy today. Look at the 4<sup>o</sup> quarter of 2012:

Infection rate ([CCM](#)) by operating system and service pack in the fourth quarter of 2012 as reported in the Microsoft [Security Intelligence Report volume 14](#)



As this graph illustrates Windows 8 is 12 times safer than XP, and 4 times safer than Vista. One other positive note is that even older PCs can run Windows 8 because this system tends to work well with older, weaker processors – thus usually no need to buy a brand new PC!

For good reasons and despite the complaints some people have voiced using W8, like every operating system, if it is set up properly by an expert, you won't want to go back to your old system. People remaining in the Microsoft world know it's simply "keeping up with the times".