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Personal computer operating system by Microsoft released in 2001 Windows XPA version of the Windows NT operating systemScreenshot of Windows XP running the Luna visual style, showing the start menu, taskbar, and My Computer windowDeveloperMicrosoftSource modelClosed-sourceSource-available (through Shared Source Initiative)[1]Released to manufacturingAugust 24, 2001; 19 years ago (2001-08-24)[2]GeneralavailabilityOctober 25, 2001; 19 years ago (2001-10-25)[2]Latest releaseService Pack 3 (5.1.2600.5512) / April 21, 2008; 13 years ago (2008-04-21)[3]Update method Windows Update Windows Server Update Services (WSUS) System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) PlatformsIA-32, x86-64, and ItaniumKernel typeHybrid (NT)UserlandWindows API, NTVDM, SFULicenseProprietary commercial softwarePreceded byWindows 2000 (1999) Windows Me (2000)Succeeded byWindows Vista (2006)Support status Mainstream support ended on April 14, 2009[4] Extended support ended on April 8, 2014[4] Exceptions exist, see § Support lifecycle for details. Part of a series onWindows XP New features Releases and editions(x64 · Media Center · Fundamentals) Windows Server 2003 Pocket PC 2002 Windows Mobile 2003 Development history Criticism Removed features XP vs. Vista vte Windows XP is a major release of the Windows NT operating system developed by Microsoft. It was the direct successor to both Windows 2000 for professional users and Windows Me for home users, and it was released to manufacturing on August 24, 2001, with retail sales beginning on October 25, 2001. It was Microsoft's operating system for use on personal computers such as home and business desktops, laptops, tablet PCs and media center PCs until replaced by Windows Vista in February 2007. Development of Windows XP began in the late 1990s as "Neptune", an operating system (OS) built on the Windows NT kernel which was intended specifically for mainstream consumer use. An updated version of Windows 2000 was also originally planned for the business market; however, in January 2000, both projects were scrapped in favor of a single OS codenamed "Whistler", which would serve as a single OS platform for both consumer and business markets. As such, Windows XP was the first consumer edition of Windows not to be based on the Windows 95 kernel and MS-DOS.[5] Upon its release, Windows XP received critical acclaim, with critics noting increased performance and stability (especially in comparison to Windows Me), a more intuitive user interface, improved hardware support, and expanded multimedia capabilities. However, some industry reviewers were concerned by the new licensing model and product activation system.[6] Extended support for Windows XP ended on April 8, 2014, after which the operating system ceased receiving further support or security updates. Windows Embedded POSReady 2009, based on Windows XP Professional, received security updates until April 2019. Unofficial methods were made available to apply the updates to other editions of Windows XP. Microsoft officially discouraged this practice, citing incompatibility issues.[7] As of May 2021[update], 0.7% of Windows PCs run Windows XP (while it is 4% in Africa),[8] and 0.23% of all devices across all platforms run Windows XP. Development Main article: Development of Windows XP In the late 1990s, initial development of what would become Windows XP was focused on two individual products: "Odyssey", which was reportedly intended to succeed the future Windows 2000; and "Neptune", which was reportedly a consumer-oriented operating system using the Windows NT architecture, succeeding the MS-DOS-based Windows 98.[9] However, the projects proved to be too ambitious. In January 2000, shortly prior to the official release of Windows 2000, technology writer Paul Thurrott reported that Microsoft had shelved both Neptune and Odyssey in favor of a new product codenamed "Whistler", named after Whistler, British Columbia, as many Microsoft employees skied at the Whistler-Blackcomb ski resort.[10] The goal of Whistler was to unify both the consumer and business-oriented Windows lines under a single, Windows NT platform: Thurrott stated that Neptune had become "a black hole when all the features that were cut from Windows Me were simply re-tagged as Neptune features. And since Neptune and Odyssey would be based on the same code-base anyway, it made sense to combine them into a single project".[11] At PDC on July 13, 2000, Microsoft announced that Whistler would be released during the second half of 2001, and also unveiled the first preview build, 2250, which featured an early implementation of Windows XP's visual styles system and interface changes to Windows Explorer and the Control Panel.[12] Microsoft released the first public beta build of Whistler, build 2296, on October 31, 2000. Subsequent builds gradually introduced features that users of the release version of Windows XP would recognize, such as Internet Explorer 6.0, the Microsoft Product Activation system and the Bliss desktop background.[13] Whistler was officially unveiled during a media event on February 5, 2001, under the name Windows XP, where XP stands for "eXPerience".[14] Release In June 2001, Microsoft indicated that it was planning to, in conjunction with Intel and other PC makers, spend at least 1 billion US dollars on marketing and promoting Windows XP.[15] The theme of the campaign, "Yes You Can", was designed to emphasize the platform's overall capabilities. Microsoft had originally planned to use the slogan "Prepare to Fly", but it was replaced because of sensitivity issues in the wake of the September 11 attacks.[16] On August 24, 2001, Windows XP build 2600 was released to manufacturing (RTM). During a ceremonial media event at Microsoft Redmond Campus, copies of the RTM build were given to representatives of several major PC manufacturers in briefcases, who then flew off on decorated helicopters. While PC manufacturers would be able to release devices running XP beginning on September 24, 2001, XP was expected to reach general, retail availability on October 25, 2001. On the same day, Microsoft also announced the final retail pricing of XP's two main editions, "Home" (as a replacement for Windows Me for home users) and "Professional" (as a replacement for Windows 2000 for professional users).[17] New and updated features Main article: Features new to Windows XP User interface Updated start menu in the Royale theme, now featuring two columns While retaining some similarities to previous versions, Windows XP's interface was overhauled with a new visual appearance, with an increased use of alpha compositing effects, drop shadows, and "visual styles", which completely changed the appearance of the operating system. The number of effects enabled are determined by the operating system based on the computer's processing power, and can be enabled or disabled on a case-by-case basis. XP also added ClearType, a new subpixel rendering system designed to improve the appearance of fonts on liquid-crystal displays.[18] A new set of system icons was also introduced.[19] The default wallpaper, Bliss, is a photo of a landscape in the Napa Valley outside Napa, California, with rolling green hills and a blue sky with stratocumulus and cirrus clouds.[20] The Start menu received its first major overhaul in XP, switching to a two-column layout with the ability to list, pin, and display frequently used applications, recently opened documents, and the traditional cascading "All Programs" menu. The taskbar can now group windows opened by a single application into one taskbar button, with a popup menu listing the individual windows. The notification area also hides "inactive" icons by default. A "common tasks" list was added, and Windows Explorer's sidebar was updated to use a new task-based design with lists of common actions; the tasks displayed are contextually relevant to the type of content in a folder (e.g. a folder with music displays offers to play all the files in the folder, or burn them to a CD).[21] The "task grouping" feature introduced in Windows XP showing both grouped and individual items Fast user switching allows additional users to log into a Windows XP machine without existing users having to close their programs and logging out. Although only one user at the time can use the console (i.e. monitor, keyboard and mouse), previous users can resume their session once they regain control of the console.[22] Infrastructure Windows XP uses prefetching to improve startup and application launch times.[23] It also became possible to revert the installation of an updated device driver, should the updated driver produce undesirable results.[24] A copy protection system known as Windows Product Activation was introduced with Windows XP and its server counterpart, Windows Server 2003. All Windows licenses must be tied to a unique ID generated using information from the computer hardware, transmitted either via the internet or a telephone hotline. If Windows is not activated within 30 days of installation, the OS will cease to function until it is activated. Windows also periodically verifies the hardware to check for changes. If significant hardware changes are detected, the activation is voided, and Windows must be re-activated.[25][dubious – discuss] Networking and internet functionality Windows XP was originally bundled with Internet Explorer 6, Outlook Express 6, Windows Messenger, and MSN Explorer. New networking features were also added, including Internet Connection Firewall, Internet Connection Sharing integration with UPnP, NAT traversal APIs, Quality of Service features, IPv6 and Teredo tunneling, Background Intelligent Transfer Service, extended fax features, network bridging, peer to peer networking, support for most DSL modems, IEEE 802.11 (Wi-Fi) connections with auto configuration and roaming, TAPI 3.1, and networking over FireWire.[26] Remote Assistance and Remote Desktop were also added, which allow users to connect to a computer running Windows XP from across a network or the Internet and access their applications, files, printers, and devices or request help.[27] Improvements were also made to IntelliMirror features such as Offline Files, Roaming user profiles and Folder redirection.[28] Other features Improved application compatibility and shims compared to Windows 2000.[29] DirectX 8.1, upgradeable to DirectX 9.0c.[30] A number of new features in Windows Explorer including task panes, thumbnails, and the option to view photos as a slideshow.[31] Improved imaging features such as Windows Picture and Fax Viewer.[32] Faster start-up, (because of improved Prefetch functions) logon, logoff, hibernation, and application launch sequences.[23] Numerous improvements to increase the system reliability such as improved System Restore,[33] Automated System Recovery,[34] and driver reliability improvements through Device Driver Rollback.[35] Hardware support improvements such as FireWire 800,[36] and improvements to multi-monitor support under the name "DualView".[37] Fast user switching,[38] The ClearType font rendering mechanism, which is designed to improve text readability on liquid-crystal display (LCD) and similar monitors, especially laptops.[18] Side-by-side assemblies[39] and registration-free COM.[40] General improvements to international support such as more locales, languages and scripts, MUI support in Terminal Services, improved Input Method Editors, and National Language Support.[41] Removed features Main article: List of features removed in Windows XP Some of the programs and features that were part of the previous versions of Windows did not make it to Windows XP. Various MS-DOS commands available in its Windows 9x predecessor were removed,[42] as were the POSIX and OS/2 subsystems.[43] In networking, NetBEUI, NWLink and NetDDE were deprecated and not installed by default.[44] Plug-and-play–incompatible communication devices (like modems and network interface cards) were no longer supported.[45] Service Pack 2 and Service Pack 3 also removed features from Windows XP, but to a less noticeable extent. For instance, support for TCP half-open connections was removed in Service Pack 2,[46] and the address bar on the taskbar was removed in Service Pack 3.[47] Editions Main article: Windows XP editions Diagram representing the main editions of Windows XP. It is based on the category of the edition (grey) and codebase (black arrow). Windows XP was released in two major editions on launch: Home Edition and Professional Edition. Both editions were made available at retail as pre-loaded software on new computers and as boxed copies. Boxed copies were sold as "Upgrade" or "Full" licenses; the "Upgrade" versions were slightly cheaper, but require an existing version of Windows to install. The "Full" version can be installed on systems without an operating system or existing version of Windows.[15] The two editions of XP were aimed at different markets: Home Edition is explicitly intended for consumer use and disables or removes certain advanced and enterprise-oriented features present on Professional, such as the ability to join a Windows domain, Internet Information Services, and Multilingual User Interface. Windows 98 or Me can be upgraded to either edition, but Windows NT 4.0 and Windows 2000 can only be upgraded to Professional.[48] Windows' software license agreement for pre-loaded licenses allows the software to be "returned" to the OEM for a refund if the user does not wish to use it.[49] Despite the refusal of some manufacturers to honor the entitlement, it has been enforced by courts in some countries.[50] Two specialized variants of XP were introduced in 2002 for certain types of hardware, exclusively through OEM channels as pre-loaded software. Windows XP Media Center Edition was initially designed for high-end home theater PCs with TV tuners (marketed under the term "Media Center PC"), offering expanded multimedia functionality, an electronic program guide, and digital video recorder (DVR) support through the Windows Media Center application.[51] Microsoft also unveiled Windows XP Tablet PC Edition, which contains additional pen input features, and is optimized for mobile devices meeting its Tablet PC specifications.[52] Two different 64-bit editions of XP were made available. The first, Windows XP 64-Bit Edition, was intended for IA-64 (Itanium) systems; as IA-64 usage declined on workstations in favor of AMD's x86-64 architecture, the Itanium edition was discontinued in January 2005.[53] A new 64-bit edition supporting the x86-64 architecture, called Windows XP Professional x64 Edition, was released in April of the same year.[54] Microsoft also targeted emerging markets with the 2004 introduction of Windows XP Starter Edition, a special variant of Home Edition intended for low-cost PCs. The OS is primarily aimed at first-time computer owners, containing heavy localization (including wallpapers and screen savers incorporating images of local landmarks), and a "My Support" area which contains video tutorials on basic computing tasks. It also removes certain "complex" features, and does not allow users to run more than three applications at a time. After a pilot program in India and Thailand, Starter was released in other emerging markets throughout 2005.[55] In 2006, Microsoft also unveiled the FlexGo initiative, which would also target emerging markets with subsidized PCs on a pre-paid, subscription basis.[56] As a result of unfair competition lawsuits in Europe and South Korea, which both alleged that Microsoft had improperly leveraged its status in the PC market to favor its own bundled software, Microsoft was ordered to release special editions of XP in these markets that excluded certain applications. In March 2004, after the European Commission fined Microsoft €497 million (US$603 million), Microsoft was ordered to release "N" editions of XP that excluded Windows Media Player, encouraging users to pick and download their own media player software.[57] As it was sold at the same price as the edition with Windows Media Player included, certain OEMs (such as Dell, who offered it for a short period, along with Hewlett-Packard, Lenovo and Fujitsu Siemens) chose not to offer it. Consumer interest was minuscule, with roughly 1,500 units shipped to OEMs, and no reported sales to consumers.[58] In December 2005, the Korean Fair Trade Commission ordered Microsoft to make available editions of Windows XP and Windows Server 2003 that do not contain Windows Media Player or Windows Messenger.[59] The "K" and "KN" editions of Windows XP were released in August 2006, and are only available in English and Korean, and also contain links to third-party instant messenger and media player software.[60] Service packs A service pack is a cumulative update package that is a superset of all updates, and even service packs, that have been released before it.[61] Three service packs have been released for Windows XP. Service Pack 3 is slightly different, in that it needs at least Service Pack 1 to have been installed, in order to update a live OS.[62] However, Service Pack 3 can still be embedded into a Windows installation disc; SP1 is not reported as a prerequisite for doing so.[63] Service Pack 1 Service Pack 1 (SP1) for Windows XP was released on September 9, 2002. It contained over 300 minor, post-RTM bug fixes, along with all security patches released since the original release of XP. SP1 also added USB 2.0 support, the Microsoft Java Virtual Machine, .NET Framework support, and support for technologies used by the then-upcoming Media Center and Tablet PC editions of XP.[64] The most significant change on SP1 was the addition of Set Program Access and Defaults, a settings page which allows programs to be set as default for certain types of activities (such as media players or web browsers) and for access to bundled, Microsoft programs (such as Internet Explorer or Windows Media Player) to be disabled. This feature was added to comply with the settlement of United States v. Microsoft Corp., which required Microsoft to offer the ability for OEMs to bundle third-party competitors to software it bundles with Windows (such as Internet Explorer and Windows Media Player), and give them the same level of prominence as those normally bundled with the OS.[65] On February 3, 2003, Microsoft released Service Pack 1a (SP1a). It was the same as SP1, except, the Microsoft Java Virtual Machine was excluded.[66] Service Pack 2 French SP2 installation disc Windows Security Center window running Windows XP Service Pack 2, showing no virus protection installed Service Pack 2 (SP2) was released on August 25, 2004.[67] Headline features included WPA encryption compatibility for Wi-Fi and usability improvements to the Wi-Fi networking user interface,[68] partial Bluetooth support,[69] and various improvements to security systems. The security improvements (codenamed "Springboard",[70] as these features were intended to underpin additional changes in Longhorn), included a major revision to the included firewall (renamed Windows Firewall, and now enabled by default), and an update to Data Execution Prevention, which gained hardware support in the NX bit that can stop some forms of buffer overflow attacks. Raw socket support is removed (which supposedly limits the damage done by zombie machines) and the Windows Messenger service (which had been abused to cause pop-up advertisements to be displayed as system messages without a web browser or any additional software) became disabled by default. Additionally, security-related improvements were made to e-mail and web browsing. Service Pack 2 also added Security Center, an interface which provides a general overview of the system's security status, including the state of the firewall and automatic updates. Third-party firewall and antivirus software can also be monitored from Security Center.[71] The unique boot screens that identified the edition of Windows XP currently running, including a green progress bar for Home Edition and a blue progress bar for other editions, were removed and replaced with a generic "Windows XP" boot screen with a blue progress bar with this service pack. In August 2006, Microsoft released updated installation media for Windows XP and Windows Server 2003 SP2 (SP2b), in order to incorporate a patch requiring ActiveX controls in Internet Explorer to be manually activated before a user may interact with them. This was done so that the browser would not violate a patent owned by Eolas.[72] Microsoft has since licensed the patent, and released a patch reverting the change in April 2008.[73] In September 2007, another minor revision known as SP2c was released for XP Professional, extending the number of available product keys for the operating system to "support the continued availability of Windows XP Professional through the scheduled system builder channel end-of-life (EOL) date of January 31, 2009."[74] Service Pack 3 The third and final Service Pack, SP3, was released to manufacturing on April 21, 2008, and to the public via both the Microsoft Download Center and Windows Update on May 6, 2008.[3] Service Pack 3 is not available for Windows XP x64, which is based on the Windows Server 2003 kernel and, as a result, uses its service packs[75] rather than the ones for the other editions.[76] It began being automatically pushed out to Automatic Updates users on July 10, 2008.[77] A feature set overview which details new features available separately as stand-alone updates to Windows XP, as well as backported features from Windows Vista, has been posted by Microsoft.[78] A total of 1,174 fixes are included in SP3.[79] Service Pack 3 can be installed on systems with Internet Explorer versions 6, 7, or 8; Internet Explorer 7 is not included as part of SP3.[80] Service Pack 3 included security enhancements over and above those of SP2, including APIs allowing developers to enable Data Execution Prevention for their code, independent of system-wide compatibility enforcement settings,[81] the Security Support Provider Interface,[82] improvements to WPA2 security,[83] and an updated version of the Microsoft Enhanced Cryptographic Provider Module that is FIPS 140-2 certified.[84] In incorporating all previously released updates not included in SP2, Service Pack 3 included many other key features. Windows Imaging Component allowed camera vendors to integrate their own proprietary image codecs with the operating system's features, such as thumbnails and slideshows.[85] In enterprise features, Remote Desktop Protocol 6.1 included support for ClearType and 32-bit color depth over RDP,[86] while improvements made to Windows Management Instrumentation in Windows Vista to reduce the possibility of corruption of the WMI repository were backported to XP SP3.[87] In addition, SP3 contains updates to the operating system components of Windows XP Media Center Edition (MCE) and Windows XP Tablet PC Edition, and security updates for .NET Framework version 1.0, which is included in these editions. However, it does not include rollups for the Windows Media Center updates in Windows XP MCE 2005.[88] SP3 also omits security updates for Windows Media Player 10, although the player is included in Windows XP MCE 2005.[88] The Address Bar DeskBand on the Taskbar is no longer included because of antitrust violation concerns.[89] Unofficial SP3 ZIP download packages were released on a now-defunct website called The Hotfix from 2005 to 2007.[90][91] The owner of the website, Ethan C. Allen, was a former Microsoft employee in Software Quality Assurance and would comb through the Microsoft Knowledge Base articles daily and download new hotfixes Microsoft would put online within the articles. The articles would be identifiable by their "kbwinxppresp3fix" and/or "kbwinxpsp3fix" tag, thus allowing Allen to easily find and determine which fixes were planned for the official SP3 release to come. Microsoft publicly stated at the time that the SP3 pack was unofficial and users should not install it.[92][93] Allen also released a Vista SP1 package in 2007, for which Allen received a cease-and-desist email from Microsoft.[94] System requirements Minimum Recommended Home/Professional Edition[A] CPU Pentium or compatible, 233 MHz[B][C]BIOS or compatible firmware[D] Pentium or compatible, 300 MHzBIOS or compatible firmware[D] Memory 64 MB[E][F] 128 MB Free space 1.5 GBMaster boot record used[G] +661 MB for Service Pack 1 and 1a[G] +1.8 GB for Service Pack 2 [H] +900 MB for Service Pack 3[I] Media CD-ROM drive or compatible Display Super VGA (800 × 600) Sound hardware N/A Sound card plus speakers/headphones Input device(s) Keyboard, mouse Professional x64 Edition[J] CPU x86-64 or compatibleBIOS or compatible firmware[D] Memory 256 MB Free space 1.5 GBMaster boot record used[D] Media CD-ROM drive or compatible Display Super VGA (800 × 600) Sound hardware N/A Sound card plus speakers/headphones Input device(s) Keyboard, mouse Notes ^ "System requirements for Windows XP operating systems". April 28, 2005. Archived from the original on August 6, 2011. Retrieved March 12, 2007. ^ Even though this is Microsoft's stated minimum processor speed for Windows XP, it is possible to install and run the operating system on early IA-32 processors such as a P5 Pentium without MMX instructions. Windows XP is not compatible with processors older than Pentium (such as 486) or the Cyrix 6x86 because it requires CMPXCHG8B (see Pentium F00F bug) instructions. ^ "Windows XP Minimal Requirement Test". Winhistory.de. September 9, 2011. Archived from the original on December 21, 2011. Retrieved January 1, 2012. ^ a b c d e "Windows XP: Required firmware and partition mapping scheme of hard disk drive". Support.microsoft.com. June 26, 2013. Archived from the original on April 27, 2017. Retrieved June 16, 2014. ^ A Microsoft TechNet paper from Summer 2001 (before Windows XP's actual release), states that: "A computer with 64 MB of RAM will have sufficient resources to run Windows XP and a few applications with moderate requirements." (Emphasis added.) These were said to be office productivity applications, e-mail programs, and web browsers (of the time). With such a configuration, user interface enhancements and fast user switching are turned off by default. For comparable workloads, 64 MB of RAM was then regarded as providing an equal or better user experience on Windows XP with similar settings than it would with Windows Me on the same hardware. In a later section of the paper, superior performance over Windows Me was noted with 128 MB of RAM or more, and with computers that exceed the minimum hardware requirements. ^ Sechrest, Stuart; Fortin, Michael (June 1, 2001). "Windows XP Performance". Microsoft TechNet. Archived from the original on July 27, 2010. Retrieved April 8, 2008. ^ "Hard disk space requirements for Windows XP Service Pack 1". Microsoft. October 29, 2007. Archived from the original on April 21, 2012. Retrieved April 6, 2012. ^ "The hard disk space requirements for Windows XP Service Pack 2". Microsoft. April 18, 2005. Archived from the original on November 24, 2010. Retrieved December 1, 2010. ^ "Windows XP – End of Support, Migration Guide, Download – TechNet". technet.microsoft.com. 2007. Archived from the original on May 13, 2008. ^ "Windows XP Professional x64 Edition SP2 VL EN (MSDN-TechNet)". Programmer Stuffs. March 23, 2011. Archived from the original on July 14, 2014. Retrieved May 2, 2012. ^ "Microsoft Windows XP 64-Bit Edition". Microsoft TechNet. Microsoft. August 15, 2001. Archived from the original on April 19, 2012. Retrieved May 2, 2012. Physical memory limits The maximum amount of RAM that Windows XP can support varies depending on the product edition and the processor architecture. Most 32-bit editions of XP support up to 4 GB, with the exception of Windows XP Starter, which is limited to 512 MB.[95]. 64-bit editions support up to 128 GB.[96] Processor limits Windows XP Professional supports up to two physical processors;[97] Windows XP Home Edition is limited to one.[98] However, XP supports a greater number of logical processors: 32-bit editions support up to 32 logical processors,[99] whereas 64-bit editions support up to 64 logical processors.[100] Support lifecycle Support summaryExpiration dateMainstream supportApril 14, 2009 (2009-04-14)[4]Extended supportApril 8, 2014 (2014-04-08)[4] The official exceptions below no longer apply, as of April 9, 2019, at the most.Applicable XP editions:Home Edition, Professional, Professional x64 Edition, Professional for Embedded Systems, Media Center Editions (all), Starter Edition, Tablet PC Edition and Tablet PC Edition 2005,[4] as well as Windows Fundamentals for Legacy PCs.[101]ExceptionsWindows XP 64-Bit Edition (Itanium edition, including Version 2003)Mainstream support ended on June 30, 2005[102]Windows XP EmbeddedMainstream support ended on January 11, 2011[4]Extended support ended on January 12, 2016[4]Windows Embedded for Point of ServiceMainstream support ended on April 12, 2011[103]Extended support ended on April 12, 2016[103]Windows Embedded Standard 2009Mainstream support ended on January 8, 2014Extended support ended on January 8, 2019[104]Windows Embedded POSReady 2009Mainstream support ended on April 8, 2014Extended support ended on April 9, 2019[105] Support for the original release of Windows XP (without a service pack) ended on September 30, 2005.[4] Both Windows XP Service Pack 1 and 1a were retired on October 10, 2006,[4] and both Windows 2000 and Windows XP SP2 reached their end of support on July 13, 2010, about 24 months after the launch of Windows XP Service Pack 3.[4] The company stopped general licensing of Windows XP to OEMs and terminated retail sales of the operating system on June 30, 2008, 17 months after the release of Windows Vista.[106] However, an exception was announced on April 3, 2008, for OEMs producing what it defined as "ultra low-cost personal computers", particularly netbooks, until one year after the availability of Windows 7 on October 22, 2010. Analysts felt that the move was primarily intended to compete against Linux-based netbooks, although Microsoft's Kevin Hutz stated that the decision was due to apparent market demand for low-end computers with Windows.[107] Variants of Windows XP for embedded systems have different support policies: Windows XP Embedded SP3 and Windows Embedded for Point of Service SP3 were supported until January and April 2016, respectively. Windows Embedded Standard 2009 and Windows Embedded POSReady 2009 were supported until January and April 2019, respectively.[108] These updates, while intended for the embedded editions, could also be downloaded on standard Windows XP with a registry hack, which enabled unofficial patches until April 2019. However, Microsoft advised Windows XP users against installing these fixes, citing incompatibility issues.[7][109] End of support On April 14, 2009, Windows XP exited mainstream support and entered the extended support phase; Microsoft continued to provide security updates every month for Windows XP, however, free technical support, warranty claims, and design changes were no longer being offered. Extended support ended on April 8, 2014, over 12 years since the release of XP; normally Microsoft products have a support life cycle of only 10 years.[110] Beyond the final security updates released on April 8, no more security patches or support information are provided for XP free-of-charge; "critical patches" will still be created, and made available only to customers subscribing to a paid "Custom Support" plan.[111] As it is a Windows component, all versions of Internet Explorer for Windows XP also became unsupported.[112] In January 2014, it was estimated that more than 95% of the 3 million automated teller machines in the world were still running Windows XP (which largely replaced IBM's OS/2 as the predominant operating system on ATMs); ATMs have an average lifecycle of between seven and ten years, but some have had lifecycles as long as 15. Plans were being made by several ATM vendors and their customers to migrate to Windows 7-based systems over the course of 2014, while vendors have also considered the possibility of using Linux-based platforms in the future to give them more flexibility for support lifecycles, and the ATM Industry Association (ATMIA) has since endorsed Windows XP as a further replacement.[113] However, ATMs typically run the embedded variant of Windows XP, which was supported through January 2016.[114] As of May 2017, around 60% of the 220,000 ATMs in India still run Windows XP.[115] Furthermore, at least 49% of all computers in China still ran XP at the beginning of 2014. These holdouts were influenced by several factors; prices of genuine copies of later versions of Windows in the country are high, while Ni Guangnan of the Chinese Academy of Sciences warned that Windows 8 could allegedly expose users to surveillance by the United States government,[116] and the Chinese government would ban the purchase of Windows 8 products for government use in May 2014 in protest of Microsoft's inability to provide "guaranteed" support.[117] The government also had concerns that the impending end of support could affect their anti-piracy initiatives with Microsoft, as users would simply pirate newer versions rather than purchasing them legally. As such, government officials formally requested that Microsoft extend the support period for XP for these reasons. While Microsoft did not comply with their requests, a number of major Chinese software developers, such as Lenovo, Kingsoft and Tencent, will provide free support and resources for Chinese users migrating from XP.[118] Several governments, in particular those of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, elected to negotiate "Custom Support" plans with Microsoft for their continued, internal use of Windows XP; the British government's deal lasted for a year, and also covered support for Office 2003 (which reached end-of-life the same day) and cost £5.5 million.[119] On March 8, 2014, Microsoft deployed an update for XP that, on the 8th of each month, displays a pop-up notification to remind users about the end of support; however, these notifications may be disabled by the user.[120] Microsoft also partnered with Laplink to provide a special "express" version of its PCmover software to help users migrate files and settings from XP to a computer with a newer version of Windows.[121] An electroencephalograph running on Windows XP. The medical industry's continued use of Windows XP is partly due to medical applications being incompatible with later versions of Windows. Despite the approaching end of support, there were still notable holdouts that had not migrated past XP; many users elected to remain on XP because of the poor reception of Windows Vista, sales of newer PCs with newer versions of Windows declined because of the Great Recession and the effects of Vista, and deployments of new versions of Windows in enterprise environments require a large amount of planning, which includes testing applications for compatibility (especially those that are dependent on Internet Explorer 6, which is not compatible with newer versions of Windows).[122] Major security software vendors (including Microsoft) planned to continue offering support and definitions for Windows XP past the end of support to varying extents, along with the developers of Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Opera web browsers;[112] despite these measures, critics similarly argued that users should eventually migrate from XP to a supported platform.[123] The United States' Computer Emergency Readiness Team released an alert in March 2014 advising users of the impending end of support, and informing them that using XP after April 8 may prevent them from meeting US government information security requirements.[124] Microsoft continued to provide Security Essentials virus definitions and updates for its Malicious Software Removal Tool (MSRT) for XP until July 14, 2015.[125] As the end of extended support approached, Microsoft began to increasingly urge XP customers to migrate to newer versions such as Windows 7 or 8 in the interest of security, suggesting that attackers could reverse engineer security patches for newer versions of Windows and use them to target equivalent vulnerabilities in XP.[126] Windows XP is remotely exploitable by numerous security holes that were discovered after Microsoft stopped supporting it.[127][128] Similarly, specialized devices that run XP, particularly medical devices, must have any revisions to their software—even security updates for the underlying operating system—approved by relevant regulators before they can be released. For this reason, manufacturers often did not allow any updates to devices' operating systems, leaving them open to security exploits and malware.[129] Despite the end of support for Windows XP, Microsoft has released three emergency security updates for the operating system to patch major security vulnerabilities: A patch released in May 2014 to address recently discovered vulnerabilities in Internet Explorer 6 through 11 on all versions of Windows.[130] A patch released in May 2017 to address a vulnerability that was being leveraged by the WannaCry ransomware attack.[131] A patch released in May 2019 to address a critical code execution vulnerability in Remote Desktop Services which can be exploited in a similar way as the WannaCry vulnerability.[132][133] Researchers reported in August 2019 that Windows 10 users may be at risk for "critical" system compromise because of design flaws of hardware device drivers from multiple providers.[134] In the same month, computer experts reported that the BlueKeep security vulnerability, CVE-2019-0708, that potentially affects older unpatched Microsoft Windows versions via the program's Remote Desktop Protocol, allowing for the possibility of remote code execution, may now include related flaws, collectively named DejaBlue, affecting newer Windows versions (i.e., Windows 7 and all recent versions) as well.[135] In addition, experts reported a Microsoft security vulnerability, CVE-2019-1162, based on legacy code involving Microsoft CTF and ctfmon (ctfmon.exe), that affects all Windows versions from the older Windows XP version to the most recent Windows 10 versions; a patch to correct the flaw is currently available.[136] Microsoft announced in July 2019 that the Microsoft Internet Games services on Windows XP and Windows Me would end on July 31, 2019 (and for Windows 7 on January 22, 2020).[137] Others, such as Steam, had done the same, ending support for Windows XP and Windows Vista in January 2019.[138] In 2020, Microsoft announced that it would disable the Windows Update service for SHA-1 endpoints; since Windows XP did not get an update for SHA-2, Windows Update Services are no longer available on the OS as of late July 2020.[139] However, as of April 2021, the old updates for Windows XP are still available on the Microsoft Update Catalog.[140] Reception On release, Windows XP received critical acclaim. CNET described the operating system as being "worth the hype", considering the new interface to be "spiffier" and more intuitive than previous versions, but feeling that it may "annoy" experienced users with its "hand-holding". XP's expanded multimedia support and CD burning functionality were also noted, along with its streamlined networking tools. The performance improvements of XP in comparison to 2000 and Me were also praised, along with its increased number of built-in device drivers in comparison to 2000. The software compatibility tools were also praised, although it was noted that some programs, particularly older MS-DOS software, may not work correctly on XP because of its differing architecture. They panned Windows XP's new licensing model and product activation system, considering it to be a "slightly annoyed roadblock", but acknowledged Microsoft's intent for the changes.[141] PC Magazine provided similar praise, although noting that a number of its online features were designed to promote Microsoft-owned services, and that aside from quicker boot times, XP's overall performance showed little difference over Windows 2000.[142] Windows XP's default theme, Luna, was criticized by some users for its childish look.[143][144] Despite extended support for Windows XP ending in 2014, many users – including some enterprises – were reluctant to move away from an operating system they viewed as a stable known quantity despite the many security and functionality improvements in subsequent releases of Windows. Windows XP's longevity was viewed as testament to its stability and Microsoft's successful attempt to keep it up to date, but also as an indictment of its direct successor's perceived failings.[145] Market share See also: Usage share of operating systems According to web analytics data generated by Net Applications, Windows XP was the most widely used operating system until August 2012, when Windows 7 overtook it (later overtaken by Windows 10),[146] while StatCounter indicates it happening almost a year earlier.[147] In January 2014, Net Applications reported a market share of 29.23%[148] of "desktop operating systems" for XP (when XP was introduced there was not a separate mobile category to track), while W3Schools reported a share of 11.0%.[149] As of March 2021[update], in regions or continents, Windows XP market share on PCs, as a fraction of the total Windows share, has gone below 1% (3.3% in Africa, where it was previously

at 0.8%[150]). XP still has a double-digit market share in a few countries, such as Armenia,[151][152] at 54%, where Windows 7 was highest ranked, and with it being replaced by Windows 10, Windows XP got highest ranked for the longest time, and had over 60% share on some weekends in summer of 2019.[153][154] Source code leak On September 23, 2020, source code for Windows XP with Service Pack 1 and Windows Server 2003 was leaked onto the imageboard 4chan by an unknown user. Anonymous users managed to compile the code, as well as a Twitter user who posted videos of the process on YouTube proving that the code was genuine.[155] The videos were later removed on copyright grounds by Microsoft. The leak is incomplete as it was missing the Winlogon source code and some other components.[156][157] The original leak itself was spread using magnet links and torrent files whose payload originally included Server 2003 and XP source code and which was later updated with additional files, among which were previous leaks of Microsoft products, its patents, media about conspiracy theories on Bill Gates by anti-vaccination movements and an assortment of PDF files on different topics.[158] Microsoft issued a statement stating that it was investigating the leaks.[159][160][161] See also BlueKeep (security vulnerability) Comparison of operating systems History of operating systems Legacy system List of operating systems References ^ "Windows Licensing Programs". Microsoft. Archived from the original on December 16, 2008. Retrieved September 21, 2008. ^ a b "An Inside Look at the Months-long Process of Getting Windows XP Ready for Release to Manufacturing | Stories". Microsoft Stories. 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[UPDATE:] Late Monday we received a statement from a Microsoft spokesperson: We recently became aware of a hack that purportedly aims to provide security updates to Windows XP customers. The security updates that could be installed are intended for Windows Embedded and Windows Server 2003 customers and do not fully protect Windows XP customers. Windows XP customers also run a significant risk of functionality issues with their machines if they install these updates, as they are not tested against Windows XP. The best way for Windows XP customers to protect their systems is to upgrade to a more modern operating system, like Windows 7 or Windows 8.1. ^ "Desktop Windows Version Market Share Worldwide | StatCounter Global Stats". gs.statcounter.com. Statcounter. Retrieved May 2, 2021. ^ Miles, Stephanie (January 24, 2000). "Microsoft consolidates Windows development efforts". CNET. CNET Networks. Archived from the original on February 1, 2014. 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Launched by Christopher "moot" Poole in October 2003, the site hosts boards dedicated to a wide variety of topics, from anime and manga to video games, music, literature, fitness, politics, and sports, among others. Registration is not available and users typically post anonymously; posting is ephemeral, as threads receiving recent replies are "bumped" to the top of their respective board and old threads are deleted as new ones are created. As of May 2021[update], 4chan receives more than 20 million unique monthly visitors, with more than 900,000 posts made daily.[2] 4chan was created as an unofficial English-language counterpart to the Japanese imageboard Futaba Channel, also known as 2chan, and its first boards were created for posting images and discussion related to anime. The site has been described as a hub of Internet subculture, with its community being influential in the formation of prominent Internet memes, such as lolcats, Rickrolling and rage comics, as well as hacktivist and political movements, such as Anonymous and the alt-right. 4chan has often been the subject of media attention as a source of controversies, including the coordination of pranks and harassment against websites and Internet users, and the posting of illegal and offensive content. The Guardian summarized the 4chan community of 2008 as "lunatic, juvenile (...) brilliant, ridiculous and alarming".[3] Background Christopher Poole, 4chan's founder, at XOXO Festival in 2012 The majority of posting on 4chan takes place on imageboards, where users have the ability to share images and create threaded discussions.[4][5] The site's homepage lists 70 imageboards and one Flash animation board, divided into seven categories: Japanese Culture, Video Games, Interests, Creative, Other, Misc. (NSFW), and Adult (NSFW). Each board has its own set of rules and is dedicated to a specific topic, variously including anime and manga, video games, music, literature, fitness, politics, and sports, among others. As of 2019, the /pol/ (Politically Incorrect), /v/ (Video Games), /vg/ (Video Games Generals), and /b/ (Random) boards receive the most daily posts. 4chan is the Internet's most trafficked imageboard, according to the Los Angeles Times.[6] 4chan's Alexa rank is 1042 as of June 2020[update][7] though it has been as high as 56.[8] It is provided to its users free of charge and consumes a large amount of bandwidth; as a result, its financing has often been problematic. Poole has acknowledged that donations alone could not keep the site online, and turned to advertising to help make ends meet.[9] However, the explicit content hosted on 4chan has deterred businesses who do not want to be associated with the site's content.[10] In January 2009, Poole signed a new deal with an advertising company; in February 2009, he was $20,000 in debt, and the site was continuing to lose money.[11] The 4chan servers were moved from Texas to California in August 2008, which upgraded the maximum bandwidth throughput of 4chan from 100Mbit/s to 1Gbit/s.[12] Unlike most web forums, 4chan does not have a registration system, allowing users to post anonymously.[13][14] Any nickname may be used when posting, even one that has been previously adopted, such as "Anonymous" or "moot".[15] In place of registration, 4chan has provided tripcodes as an optional form of authenticating a poster's identity.[14] As making a post without filling in the "Name" field causes posts to be attributed to "Anonymous", general understanding on 4chan holds that Anonymous is not a single person but a collective (hive) of users.[17] Moderators generally post without a name even when performing sysop actions. A "capcode" may be used to attribute the post to "Anonymous ## Mod", although moderators often post without the capcode.[18] In a 2011 interview on Nico Nico Douga, Poole explained that there are approximately 20 volunteer moderators active on 4chan.[note 1] 4chan also has a junior moderation team, called "janitors", who may delete posts or images and suggest that the normal moderation team ban a user, but who cannot post with a capcode. Revealing oneself as a janitor is grounds for immediate dismissal.[19] History The site was launched as 4chan.net on October 1, 2003 by Christopher Poole, then a fifteen-year-old student from New York City using the online handle "moot".[21] Poole had been a regular participant on Something Awful's subforum "Anime Death Tentacle Rape Whorehouse" (ADTRW), where many users were familiar with the Japanese imageboard format and Futaba Channel ("2chan.net").[13] When creating 4chan, Poole obtained Futaba Channel's open source code and translated the Japanese text into English using AltaVista's Babel Fish online translator.[note 1][22] After the site's creation, Poole invited users from the ADTRW subforum, many of whom were dissatisfied with the site's moderation, to visit 4chan, which he advertised as an English-language counterpart to Futaba Channel and a place for Western fans to discuss anime and manga.[5][23] [24] At its founding, the site only hosted one board: /b/ (Anime/Random).[note 1] Before the end of 2003, several new anime-related boards were added, including /h/ (Hentai), /c/ (Anime/Cute), /d/ (Hentai/Alternative), /w/ (Wallpapers/Anime), /y/ (Yaoi), and /a/ (Anime). Additionally, a lolicon board was created at /l/ (Lolikon),[26] but was disabled following the posting of genuine child pornography and ultimately deleted in October 2004, after threats of legal action.[27][28] In February 2004, GoDaddy suspended the 4chan.net domain, prompting Poole to move the site to its current domain at 4chan.org. On March 1, 2004, Poole announced that he lacked the funds to pay the month's server bill, but was able to continue operations after receiving a swarm of donations.[29] In June 2004, 4chan experienced six weeks of downtime after PayPal suspended 4chan's donations service after receiving complaints about the site's content.[30] Following 4chan's return, several non-anime related boards were introduced, including /k/ (Weapons), /o/ (Auto), and /v/ (Video Games).[31] In 2008, nine new boards were created, including the sports board at /sp/, the fashion board at /fa/ and the "Japan/General" (the name later changed to "Otaku Culture") board at /jp/.[32] In January 2011, Poole announced the deletion of the /r9k/ ("ROBOT9000") and /new/ (News) boards, saying that /new/ had become devoted to racist discussions, and /r9k/ no longer served its original purpose of being a test implementation of xkcd's ROBOT9000 script.[33] During the same year, the /soc/ board was created in an effort to reduce the number of socialization threads on /b/. /r9k/ was restored on October 23, 2011, along with /hc/ ("Hardcore", previously deleted), /pol/ (a rebranding of /new/) and the new /diy/ board, in addition to an apology by Poole where he recalls how he criticized the deletion of Encyclopedia Dramatica and realized that he had done the same.[34] In 2010, 4chan had implemented reCAPTCHA in an effort to thwart spam arising from JavaScript worms.[note 1] In November 2011, 4chan made the transition to utilizing Cloudflare following a series of DDoS attacks. The 4chan imageboards were rewritten in valid HTML5/CSS3 in May 2012 in an effort to improve client-side performance.[12] On September 28, 2012, 4chan introduced a "4chan pass"[35] that, when purchased, "allows users to bypass typing a reCAPTCHA verification when posting and reporting posts on the 4chan image boards"; the money raised from the passes will go towards supporting the site.[36] Hiroyuki Nishimura, the owner of 4chan since 2015 On January 21, 2015, Poole stepped down as the site's administrator, citing stress from controversies such as Gamergate as the reason for his departure.[37][38][39] On September 21, 2015, Poole announced that Hiroyuki Nishimura had purchased from him the ownership rights to 4chan, without disclosing the terms of the acquisition.[24][40][41] Nishimura was the former administrator of 2channel between 1999 and 2014, the website forming the basis for anonymous posting culture which influenced later websites such as Futaba Channel and 4chan;[42] Nishimura lost 2channel's domain after it was seized by his registrar, Jim Watkins,[43][44] after the latter alleged financial difficulties.[45] In October 2016, it was reported that the site was facing financial difficulties that could lead to its closure or radical changes.[46] In a post titled "Winter is Coming", Hiroyuki Nishimura said, "We had tried to keep 4chan as is. But I failed. I am sincerely sorry", citing server costs, infrastructure costs, and network fees.[47] On November 17, 2018, it was announced that the site would be split into two, with the work-safe boards moved to a new domain, 4channel.org, while the NSFW boards would remain on the 4chan.org domain. In a series of posts on the topic, Nishimura explained that the split was due to 4chan being blacklisted by most advertising companies, and that the new 4channel domain would allow for the site to receive advertisements by mainstream ad providers.[48] In a 2020 interview with Vice Media, several current or past moderators spoke about what they perceived as racist intent behind the site's management. They described how a managing moderator named RapeApe is attempting to use the site as a tool for the alt-right, and how Nishimura is "hands off, leaving moderation of the site primarily to RapeApe." Neither Nishimura nor RapeApe responded to these allegations.[49] Christopher Poole Poole kept his real-life identity hidden until it was revealed on July 9, 2008, in the Wall Street Journal. Prior to that, he had used the alias "moot".[21] In April 2009, Poole was voted the world's most influential person of 2008 by an open Internet poll conducted by Time magazine.[50] The results were questioned even before the poll completed, as automated voting programs and manual ballot stuffing were used to influence the vote.[51][52][53] 4chan's interference with the vote seemed increasingly likely, when it was found that reading the first letter of the first 21 candidates in the poll spelled out a phrase containing two 4chan memes: "mARBLECAKE. ALSO, THE GAME."[54] On September 12, 2009, Poole gave a talk on why 4chan has a reputation as a "Meme Factory" at the Paraflows Symposium in Vienna, Austria, which was part of the Paraflows 09 festival, themed Urban Hacking. In this talk, Poole mainly attributed this to the anonymous system, and to the lack of data retention on the site ("The site has no memory.").[55][56] In April 2010, Poole gave evidence in the trial United States of America v. David Kernell as a government witness.[57] As a witness, he explained the terminology used on 4chan to the prosecutor, ranging from "OP" to "lurker". He also explained to the court the nature of the data given to the FBI as part of the search warrant, including how users can be uniquely identified from an audit logs.[58] Notable imageboards /b/ Main article: /b/ The "random" board, /b/, follows the design of Futaba Channel's Nijiura board. It was the first board created, and was described in 2009 as 4chan's most popular board, accounting for 30% of site traffic at the time.[59][60] Gawker's Nick Douglas summarized /b/ as a board where "people try to shock, entertain, and coax free porn from each other."[4] /b/ has a "no rules" policy, except for bans on certain illegal content, such as child pornography, invasions of other websites (posting floods of disruptive content), and under-18 viewing, all of which are inherited from site-wide rules. The "no invasions" rule was added in late 2006, after /b/ users spent most of that summer "invading" Habbo Hotel. The "no rules" policy also applies to actions of administrators and moderators, which means that users may be banned at any time, for any reason, including for no reason at all.[61] Due partially to its anonymous nature, board moderation is not always successful—indeed, the site's anti-child pornography rule is a subject of jokes on /b/.[8] Christopher Poole told The New York Times, in a discussion on the moderation of /b/, that "the power lies in the community to dictate its own standards" and that site staff simply provided a framework.[62] The humor of /b/'s many users; who refer to themselves as "/b/tards",[62][63] is often referred to by outsiders as trolls, who regularly act with the intention of "doing it for the lulz", a corruption of "LOL" used to denote amusement at another's expense.[62][64] The New York Observer has described posters as "immature pranksters whose bad behavior is encouraged by the site's total anonymity and the absence of an archive".[65] Douglas said of the board, "reading /b/ will melt your brain", and cited Encyclopedia Dramatica's definition of /b/ as "the asshole of the Internets [sic]".[4] Matthias Schwartz of The New York Times likened /b/ to "a high-school bathroom stall, or an obscene telephone party line",[62] while Baltimore City Paper wrote that "in the high school of the Internet, /b/ is the kid with a collection of butterfly knives and a locker full of porn.[5] Wired describes /b/ as "notorious".[63] Each post is assigned a post number. Certain post numbers are sought after with a large amount of posting taking place to "GET" them. A "GET" occurs when a post's number ends in a special number, such as 12345678, 22222222, or every millionth post.[66] A sign of 4chan's scaling, according to Poole, was when GETs lost meaning due to the high post rate resulting in a GET occurring every few weeks. He estimated /b/'s post rate in July 2008 to be 150,000–200,000 posts per day.[4] /pol/ Main article: /pol/ /pol/ ("Politically Incorrect") is 4chan's political discussion board. A stickied thread on its front page states that the board's intended purpose is "discussion of news, world events, political issues, and other related topics."[68] /pol/ was created in October 2011 as a rebranding of 4chan's news board, /new/,

[34] which was deleted that January for a high volume of racist discussion.[33] Although there had previously been a strong left-libertarian contingent to 4chan activists, there was a gradual rightward turn on 4chan's politics board in the early-mid 2010s.[69] The board quickly attracted posters with a political persuasion that later would be described with a new term, the alt-right.[70] Media sources have characterized /pol/ as predominantly racist and sexist, with many of its posts taking an explicitly neo-Nazi bent.[71][72][73][74] The Southern Poverty Law Center regards /pol/'s rhetorical style as widely emulated by white supremacist websites such as The Daily Stormer; the Stormer's editor, Andrew Anglin, concurred.[72] /pol/ was where screenshots of Trayvon Martin's hacked social media accounts were initially posted.[75][76] The board's users have started antifeminist, homophobic, transphobic, and anti-Arab Twitter campaigns.[73][77][78][79] Many /pol/ users favored Donald Trump during his 2016 United States presidential campaign. Both Trump and his son, Donald Trump Jr., appeared to acknowledge the support by tweeting /pol/-associated memes. Upon his successful election, a /pol/ moderator embedded a pro-Trump video at the top of all of the board's pages.[80][81][82][83] /r9k/ /r9k/ is a board which implements Randall Munroe's "ROBOT9000" algorithm, where no exact reposts are permitted.[84][85] The board was initially centered around NEET and hikikomori lifestyles,[86] and is credited as the origin of the "greentext" rhetorical style.[87] By 2012, personal confession stories of self-loathing, depression, and attempted suicide, began to supersede /b/-style roleplaying, otaku, and video game discussion.[88][89][86] The users of /r9k/ built upon by then popular 4chan memes "epic win" and "fail" to grounge the human population into "alphas", or stereotypical well-adjusted popular people, and "betas", or stereotypical geek-ish social rejects, self-identifying with the latter.[88][89] It gained more traction on the forum following the Umpqua Community College shooting, where it is believed that the shooter, Chris Harper-Mercer, also warned people not to go to school in the Northwest, hours prior to the shooting as users encouraged him.[94][95] The perpetrator of the Toronto van attack referenced 4chan and an incel rebellion in a Facebook post he made prior to the attack, while praising self-identified incel Elliot Rodger, the killer behind the 2014 Isla Vista killings.[96][97] He claims to have talked with both Harper-Mercer and Rodger on Reddit and 4chan and believes that he was part of a "beta uprising", also posting a message on 4chan about his intention the day before his attack.[98][99] Internet culture Early internet memes Many early memes that originated at 4chan have gained media attention. This included "So I herd u liek mudkipz" [sic], which involved a phrase based on Pokémon and which generated numerous YouTube tribute videos,[13] and the term "an hero" [sic] as a synonym for suicide, after a misspelling in the Myspace online memorial of seventh grader Mitchell Henderson.[100] 4chan and other websites, such as the satirical Encyclopedia Dramatica, have also contributed to the development of significant amounts of leetspeak.[101] A lolcat image using the "I'm in ur..." format A lolcat is an image combining a photograph of a cat with text intended to contribute humour. The text is often idiosyncratic and grammatically incorrect. In 2005, the meme was widely popularized by 4chan in the form of "Caturday". Every Saturday, users posted pictures of cats with image macros relating to that day's theme.[102][103] In 2005, a meme known as the "duckroll" began, after Poole used a word filter to change "egg" to "duck" across 4chan. Thus, words such as "eggroll" were changed to "duckroll". This led to a bait-and-switch in which external links disguised as relevant to a discussion instead led to a picture of a duck on wheels.[104] An unidentified 4chan user applied the concept of the duckroll to a 2007 post relating to the video game Grand Theft Auto IV. In March of that year, the game's trailer had been released, and the game's immense popularity caused publisher Rockstar Games' website to crash. The user posted a YouTube link that purportedly led to the trailer, but in reality directed users to the music video for Rick Astley's 1987 song "Never Gonna Give You Up". Thus, the "rickroll" was born.[104] In an interview with the Los Angeles Times, Astley said he found the meme "bizarre and funny".[3][104][105] A link to the YouTube video of Tay Zonday's song "Chocolate Rain" was posted on /b/ on July 11, 2007.[106] The Age reported that 4chan posters urged each other to "swarm" the video on YouTube and thus increase its ranking.[107] The video became an immensely popular Internet meme, resulting in cover versions by John Mayer and Green Day drummer Tré Cool.[108] The portion of the song in which Zonday turns away from the microphone, with a caption stating "I move away from the mic to breathe in", became an oft-repeated meme on 4chan and inspired remixes.[106][109] The character of Boxxy is portrayed by Catherine "Catie" Wayne, an American Internet celebrity known for her highly energetic vlogs. Her rise to exposure began in late 2008 and early 2009, surrounding self-made videos that were initially made to be posted to her Gaia Online profile.[110][111][112][113] They then spread to 4chan and other sites, resulting in a large online following.[110] In his American incarnation, Pedobear is an anthropomorphic bear child predator that is often used within the community to mock contributors showing a sexual interest in children.[114] Pedobear is one of the most popular memes on non-English imageboards, and has gained recognition across Europe. In February 2010, a photoshopped version of Pedobear appeared along with mascots of the 2010 Winter Olympics in an article on the games in Gazeta Olsztyńska, a Polish newspaper. This was done accidentally; due to the image being used from Google Images, the authors were unaware of the joke.[115] Similarly, the Dutch television guide Avrobode[116] used one of the images. It has been used as a symbol of pedophilia by Maltese graffiti vandals prior to a papal visit.[117] Anonymous and anti-Scientology activism Protests against Scientology See also: Anonymous (group) and Project Chanology 4chan has been labeled as the starting point of the Anonymous meme by The Baltimore City Paper,[8] due to the norm of posts signed with the "Anonymous" moniker. The National Post's David George-Cosh said it has been "widely reported" that Anonymous is associated with 4chan and 711chan, as well as numerous Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channels.[118] Through its association with Anonymous, 4chan has become associated with Project Chanology, a worldwide protest against the Church of Scientology held by members of Anonymous. On January 15, 2008, a 4chan user posted to /b/, suggesting participants "do something big" against the Church of Scientology's website. This message resulted in the Church receiving threatening phone calls. It quickly grew into a large real-world protest. Unlike previous Anonymous attacks, this action was characterized by 4chan members including rickrolls and Guy Fawkes masks. The raid drew criticism from some 4chan users who felt it would bring the site undesirable attention.[8] My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic fandom The adult fandom and subculture dedicated to the children's animated television series My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic began on the "Comics & Cartoons" (/co/) board of 4chan. The show was first discussed with some interest around its debut in October 2010.[119][120][121][122][123] In an article published on the animation website Cartoon Brew, titled The End of the Creator-Driven Era in TV Animation, the writer Amid Amidi referenced the then-recent debut of the show as an example of how the talent of creators such as Lauren Faust was being used to work on behalf of an established toy-franchise property rather than original ideas developed by creators themselves.[124][119] The article was shared on /co/, where the alarmist tone of the essay provoked heightened interest in the show, resulting in praise for its plot, characters, and animation style.[119] The moderation of My Little Pony related topics on 4chan became controversial; discussion of the show extended to the /b/ board, reaching a volume and intrusiveness that was eventually met with hostile reactions from other 4chan users. This resulted in intervention from a moderator, with an introduction of automatic one day ban on the use of the word "pony", to prevent discussion of the show. Discussion of the show began to spread to communities external to 4chan in reaction, including the establishment of the fan news website Equestria Daily, causing the show to reach a wider audience across the internet. These events were described as a "civil war" internal to 4chan.[119] The site administrator moot eventually settled the matter by creating the board dedicated to discussion of the show, "Pony" (/mlp/), and apologised on behalf of the moderation team for neglecting "one of the largest subcultures in 4chan's history".[125] There is a ban on discussion of the show globally on the site outside of this board.[61] Other media attention Arrests for animal abuse On February 15, 2009, a user uploaded two YouTube videos that showed the physical abuse of a domestic cat named Dusty by a person calling himself "Timmy". The 4chan community was able to track down the originator of the videos, a fourteen-year-old from Lawton, Oklahoma, and passed his details to his local police department. As a result of this, a suspect was arrested and the cat was treated by a veterinarian and taken to a safe place.[126][127] "This post is art" On July 30, 2014, an anonymous user made a reply in a thread on the board /pol/ "Politically Incorrect" of 4chan, criticizing modern art in an ironic fashion, saying: Art used to be something to cherish Now literally anything could be art This post is art.— Anonymous[128] Less than an hour later the post was photographed off the screen and framed by another user who posted another reply in the thread with a photo of the framed quote. Later the user, after endorsement by other anonymous users in the thread, created an auction on eBay for the framed photo which quickly rose to high prices, culminating in a price of $90,900.00.[129][130][131][132] Death of Jeffrey Epstein Main article: Death of Jeffrey Epstein A report of Jeffrey Epstein's death was posted on /pol/ around 40 minutes before ABC News broke the news. It was originally suspected that the unidentified person who made the posts may have been a first responder, prompting a review by the New York City Fire Department, who later confirmed that the post did not come from a member of its department.[133][134] Controversies Internet attacks See also: Anonymous (group) 4chan raids (2003–2007), and Sarah Palin email hack According to The Washington Post, "the site's users have managed to pull off some of the highest-profile collective actions in the history of the Internet.[135] Users of 4chan and other websites "raided" Hal Turner by launching DDoS attacks and prank calling his phone-in radio show during December 2006 and January 2007. The attacks caused Turner's website to go offline. This cost thousands of dollars of bandwidth bills according to Turner. In response, Turner sued 4chan, 7chan, and other websites; however, he lost his plea for an injunction and failed to receive letters from the court.[136] KTTV Fox 11 aired a report on Anonymous, calling them a group of "hackers on steroids", "domestic terrorists", and collectively an "Internet hate machine" on July 26, 2007.[137] Slashdot founder Rob Malda posted a comment made by another Slashdot user, Miang, stating that the story focused mainly on users of "4chan, 7chan and 420chan". Miang claimed that the report "seems to confuse /b/ raids and motivational poster templates with a genuine threat to the American public", arguing that the "unrelated" footage of a van exploding shown in the report was to "equate anonymous posting with domestic terror".[138] On July 10, 2008, the swastika CJK unicode character (卐) appeared at the top of Google's Hot Trends list—a tally of the most used search terms in the United States—for several hours. It was later reported that the HTML numeric character reference for the symbol had been posted on /b/, with a request to perform a Google search for the string. A multitude of /b/ visitors followed the order and pushed the symbol to the top of the chart, though Google later removed the result.[6] Later that year, the private Yahoo! Mail account of Sarah Palin, Republican vice presidential candidate in the 2008 United States presidential election, was hacked by a 4chan user. The hacker posted the account's password on /b/, and screenshots from within the account to WikiLeaks.[139] A /b/ user then logged in and changed the password, posting a screenshot of him sending an email to a friend of Palin's informing her of the new password on the /b/ thread. However, he forgot to blank out the password in the screenshot.[140] A multitude of /b/ users attempted to log in with the new password, and the account was automatically locked out by Yahoo!. The incident was criticized by some /b/ users, in that most reports on the hack focused on 4chan, rather than Palin's violation of campaign law. One user commented, "seriously, /b/. We could have changed history and failed, epically."[141] The FBI and Secret Service began investigating the incident shortly after its occurrence. On September 20 it was revealed they were questioning David Kernell, the son of Democratic Tennessee State Representative Mike Kernell.[142] The stock price of Apple Inc. fell significantly in October 2008 after a hoax story was submitted to CNN's user-generated news site iReport.com claiming that company CEO Steve Jobs had suffered a major heart attack. The source of the story was traced back to 4chan.[143][144] In May 2009, members of the site attacked YouTube, posting pornographic videos on the site.[145] A 4chan member acknowledged being part of the attack, telling BBC News that it was in response to YouTube "deleting music".[146] In January 2010, members of the site attacked YouTube again in response to the suspension of YouTube user lukeywes1234 for failing to meet the minimum age requirement of thirteen.[147] The videos uploaded by the user had apparently become popular with 4chan members, who subsequently became angered after the account was suspended and called for a new wave of pornographic uploads to be uploaded to YouTube on January 6, 2010.[147] Later the same year, 4chan made numerous disruptive pranks directed at singer Justin Bieber.[148] In September 2010, in retaliation against the Bollywood film industry's hiring of Aiplex Software to launch cyberattacks against The Pirate Bay, Anonymous members, recruited through posts on 4chan boards, subsequently initiated their own attacks, dubbed Operation Payback, targeting the website of the Motion Picture Association of America and the Recording Industry Association of America.[149][150][151] The targeted websites usually went offline for a short period of time due to the attacks, before recovering. The website of the UK law firm ACS:Law, which was associated with an anti-piracy client, was affected by the cyber-attack.[152] In retaliation for the initial attacks being called only a minor nuisance, Anonymous launched more attacks, bringing the site down yet again. After coming back up, the front page accidentally revealed a backup file of the entire website, which contained over 300 megabytes of private company emails, which were leaked to several torrents and across several sites on the Internet.[153] It was suggested that the data leak could cost the law firm up to £500,000 in fines for breaching British Data Protection Laws.[154] In January 2011, BBC News reported that the law firm announced they were to stop "chasing illegal file-sharers". Head of ACS:Law Andrew Crossley in a statement to a court addressed issues which influenced the decision to back down "I have ceased my work ... I have been subject to criminal attack. My e-mails have been hacked. I have had death threats and bomb threats."[152] In August 2012, 4chan users attacked a third-party sponsored Mountain Dew campaign, Dub the Dew, where users were asked to submit and vote on name ideas for a green apple flavor of the drink. Users submitted entries such as "Diabeetus", "Fapple", several variations of "Gushing Granny", and "Hitler did nothing wrong".[155][156] Threats of violence On October 18, 2006, the Department of Homeland Security warned National Football League officials in Miami, New York City, Atlanta, Seattle, Houston, Oakland, and Cleveland about a possible threat involving the simultaneous use of dirty bombs at stadiums.[157] The threat claimed that the attack would be carried out on October 22, the final day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.[158] Both the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security expressed doubt concerning the credibility of the threats, but warned the relevant organizations as a precaution. The games proceeded as planned but used a higher level of security awareness.[159] The threats came to light in the national media after Jake Brahm admitted to having posted the threats on 4chan and repeating them on other websites approximately 40 times.[158] Hello, /b/. On September 11, 2007, at 9:11 am Central time, two pipe bombs will be remote-detonated at Pflugerville High School. Promptly after the blast, I, along with two other Anonymous, will charge the building, armed with a Bushmaster AR-15, IMI Galil AR, a vintage, government-issue M1 .30 Carbine, and a Benelli M4 semi auto shotgun. —The Pflugerville threat[160] Brahm did not expect the message to be taken seriously since he "would never take anything posted on 4chan as fact";[161] an FBI official was quoted as saying the "credibility of [the threat] was beyond ridiculous".[8] As a parody of the incident, 4chan temporarily added "Don't mess with football" as an additional rule for /b/.[8] On October 20, 2006, Brahm turned himself in to federal authorities, and was charged with fabricating a fake terrorist threat and taken into custody.[162] On February 28, 2008, he pleaded guilty to the federal charges. On June 5, 2008, he was sentenced to six months in prison, six months' house arrest, and ordered to pay $26,750 in restitution.[163] Around midnight on September 11, 2007, a student posted photographs of mock pipe bombs and another photograph of him holding them while saying he would blow up his high school—Pflugerville High School in Pflugerville, Texas—at 9:11 am on September 11.[160] Users of 4chan helped to track him down by finding the perpetrator's father's name in the Exif data of a photograph he took, and contacted the police.[164] He was arrested before school began that day.[165][166][167][168] The incident turned out to be a hoax; the "weapons" were toys and there were no actual bombs.[169] Jarrad Willis, a 20-year-old from Melbourne, Australia was arrested on December 8, 2007, after apparently posting on 4chan that he was "going to shoot and kill as many people as I can until which time I am incapacitated or killed by the police".[170] The post, accompanied by an image of another man holding a shotgun, threatened a shopping mall near Beverly Hills.[171] While the investigation was still open, Willis was charged with criminal defamation for a separate incident[172] but died before the case was heard.[173] On February 4, 2009, a posting on the 4chan /b/ board[174] said there would be a school shooting at St Eskils Gymnasium in Eskilstuna, Sweden, leading 1,250 students and 50 teachers to be evacuated.[175] A 21-year-old man was arrested after 4chan provided the police with the IP address of the poster. Police said that the suspect called it off as a joke, and they released him after they found no indication that the threat was serious.[176][177] On January 21, 2014, an anonymous poster started a thread on /b/ identifying a student named Westley Sullivan who apparently went to the same high school as the poster. The original post included a link to Westley Sullivan's Facebook profile, which has since been taken down, and a screenshot of a post which said "if fairview isnt closed tomorrow im going to blow it up", referring to Sullivan's high school, Fairview High School, in Ashland, Kentucky. A few anonymous individuals went to Sullivan's Facebook profile and found his address, phone number, school ID number, school schedule and teachers, and other personal information. Information like his teachers and ID number had been posted directly, and the more personal information like his address was found in the EXIF data of some of the pictures posted on his profile. These individuals then contacted Fairview school officials and the local police department, as well as the FBI. The next day it was learned that police had arrested Sullivan in his home and he had been charged with 2nd degree terroristic threatening, a Class D felony in Kentucky.[178][179] On June 28, 2018, a man named Eric M. Radulovic was arrested following an indictment by the U.S. Department of Justice "on one count of transmitting in interstate and foreign commerce a threat to injure the person of another."[180] The indictment alleged that Radulovic posted anonymously to /pol/ the day after the Unite the Right rally, communicating an intention to attack protestors at an upcoming right-wing demonstration, ostensibly to elicit sympathy for the alt-right movement. "I'm going to bring a Remington 700 and start shooting Alt-right guys. We need sympathy after that landwhale got all the liberals teary eyed, so someone is going to have to make it look like the left is becoming more violent and radicalized. It's a false flag for sure, but I'll be aiming for the more tanned/dark haired muddied jeans in the crowd so real whites won't have to worry," wrote Radulovic, according to the indictment.[180] Arrests for child pornography On November 29, 2010, Ali Saad, a 19-year-old, was arrested and had his home raided by the FBI for posting child pornography and death threats on 4chan. Ali had first visited 4chan "a week before [the FBI raid] happened". He admitted to downloading about 25 child pornography images from 4chan.[181] Collin Campbell, a U.S. Navy Machinist's Mate, was arrested in February 2011 after a fellow seaman found child pornography on his iPhone that he had downloaded entirely from 4chan.[182][183][184][185] Ronald Ohlson, 37, was raided in April 2011 at his upstate New York home by the Department of Homeland Security after he acquired child pornography from 4chan.[186] After 4chan reported a 15-year-old boy in California who posted child pornography, the United States Department of Homeland Security raided his home on June 7, 2011, and took all of his electronic items.[187] On February 17, 2012, Thaddeus McMichael was arrested by the FBI for child pornography charges after posting comments on Facebook claiming that he possessed child pornography.[188] According to the official criminal complaint filed against Thaddeus, he admitted to obtaining child pornography from the /b/ board on 4chan.[189] Celebrity photo leaks Main article: August 2014 celebrity photo leaks On August 31, 2014, a large number of private photographs taken by celebrities were posted online due to a compromise of user passwords at iCloud.[190] The images were initially posted on 4chan.[191] As a result of the incident, 4chan announced that it would enforce a Digital Millennium Copyright Act policy, which would allow content owners to remove material that had been shared on the site illegally, and would ban users who repeatedly posted stolen material.[192] Cyberbullying In January 2011, Matthew Riskin Bean, a 20-year-old man from New Jersey, was sentenced to 45 days in prison for cyberbullying on 4chan.[193] Gamergate See also: Gamergate controversy Also in August 2014, 4chan was involved in the Gamergate controversy, which began with unsubstantiated allegations about indie game developer Zoë Quinn from an ex-boyfriend, followed by false allegations from anonymous Internet users.[194] The allegations were followed by a harassment campaign against several women in the video game industry, organized by 4chan users,[195] particularly /r9k/.[89] Discussion regarding Gamergate was banned on 4chan due to alleged rule violations, and Gamergate supporters moved to alternate forums such as 8chan.[196][197] Murder in Port Orchard, Washington According to court documents filed on November 5, 2014, there were images posted to 4chan that appeared to be of a murder victim. The body was discovered in Port Orchard, Washington, after the images were posted.[198] The posts were accompanied by the text: "Turns out it's way harder to strangle someone to death than it looks on the movies." A later post said: "Check the news for Port Orchard, Washington, in a few hours. Her son will be home from school soon. He'll find her, then call the cops. I just wanted to share the pics before they find me."[198] The victim was Amber Lynn Coplin, aged 30. The suspect, 33-year-old David Michael Kalac, surrendered to police in Oregon later the same day; he was charged with second-degree murder involving domestic violence.[199] Kalac was convicted in April 2017 and was sentenced to 82 years in the following month.[200] Bianca Devins murder Main article: Murder of Bianca Devins On July 14, 2019, 17-year-old Bianca Devins was murdered by 21-year-old Brandon Clark of Utica, New York after the two went to a concert together.[201] The suspect took pictures of the victim's bloodied deceased body and posted it to Discord and his own Instagram page.[202] The photos were widely shared on Instagram and other sites, particularly on 4chan where many users mocked and celebrated her death, saying she deserved it and praising the killer while depicting Devins as a manipulative young woman.[203][204] Devins had developed a small following online and was a 4chan user herself.[205] ISP bans AT&T temporary ban On July 26, 2009, AT&T's DSL branch temporarily blocked access to the img.4chan.org domain (host of /b/ and /r9k/), which was initially believed to be an attempt at Internet censorship, and met with hostility on 4chan's part.[206][207] The next day, AT&T issued a statement claiming that the block was put in place after an AT&T customer was affected by a DoS attack originating from IP addresses connected to img.4chan.org, and was an attempt to "prevent this attack from disrupting service for the impacted AT&T customer, and... our other customers." AT&T maintains that the block was not related to the content on 4chan.[208] 4chan's founder Christopher Poole responded with the following:[209][210] In the end, this wasn't a sinister act of censorship, but rather a bit of a mistake and a poorly executed, disproportionate response on AT&T's part. Whoever pulled the trigger on blackholing the site probably didn't anticipate [nor intend] the consequences of doing so. We're glad to see this short-lived debacle has prompted renewed interest and debate over net neutrality and Internet censorship—two very important issues that don't get nearly enough attention—so perhaps this was all just a blessing in disguise. Major news outlets have reported that the issue may be related to the DDoS-ing of 4chan, and that 4chan users suspected the then-owner of Swedish-based website Anontalk.com.[211][212] Verizon temporary ban On February 4, 2010, 4chan started receiving reports from Verizon Wireless customers that they were having difficulties accessing the site's image boards. After investigating, Poole found out that only the traffic on port 80 to the boards.4chan.org domain was affected, leading members to believe that the block was intentional. Three days later, Verizon Wireless confirmed that 4chan was "explicitly blocked". The block was lifted several days later.[213] Telstra ban On March 20, 2019, Australian telecom company Telstra denied access to millions of Australians to 4chan, 8chan, Zero Hedge and LiveLeak as a reaction to the Christchurch mosque shootings.[214] New Zealand Following the Christchurch mosque shootings numerous ISPs temporarily blocked any site hosting a copy of the livestream of the shooting. This included Spark, Vodafone, Vocus and 2degrees.[215][216] See also international portal Comedy portal Katawa Shoujo List of Internet phenomena Pepe the Frog Notes ^ a b c As explained by Poole during a live-online online interview with Hiroyuki Nishimura, founder of 2channel, on the Japanese website Nico Nico Douga during his trip to Japan in 2011.[25] ^ ie North American athletic types, not Scotsmen

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