

What was the code name for 64-bit Windows?

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The code name for the effort to port Windows from 32-bit to 64-bit was *Sundown*. Although the intended target was Intel's Itanium architecture, the initial effort was to port 32-bit Windows to the 64-bit Alpha AXP. At the time, Itanium chips existed only in simulators. but Alpha AXP chips had been in production for years, and there was a glut of unused Alpha AXP systems among Microsoft Windows developers.

The code name for the 64-bit Windows project was *Sundown*.

I hadn't given the code name much thought. Lots of projects have code names, and you rarely think deeply about the name. It's just an arbitrary collection of words to identify a project.

It wasn't until the ship party that I realized that the code name actually meant something. The project lead went on stage to thank everyone for their hard work and congratulate them on a job well done, and then finished the speech by announcing *Sun? Down!*

It was then that I realized that the code name of "Sundown" was not chosen arbitrarily. It was a jab at Sun Microsystems, who had recently released Solaris 7, a 64-bit operating system built on the UltraSPARC processor. The 64-bit version of Windows was a direct attack against Sun's early foothold, with the goal of unseating the current leader.

Today, the leading 64-bit operating system is neither Solaris nor Windows. It's Android: As of 2020, over 80% of adults in the world own a smartphone, over 70% of smartphones are running Android, and nearly 90% of Android devices use ARM64.