

Experts Update

Brought
to you
by:



980 South Telegraph Road
Monroe, Michigan 48161
(734) 457-5000
info@expertsmi.com

November
2006



What You Need To Know When Considering Windows Vista Options

It's official! Windows Vista will hit the shelves in early 2007.

You've probably already heard plenty of details about this new version of Windows. As with past Windows releases, the question for small- and medium-size businesses isn't if they'll upgrade, it's when.

Here are some things to think about as you consider your upgrade options.

What You Get with Windows Vista

Windows Vista includes a multitude of new features, and this list isn't meant to be exhaustive. These are some of the items that should be high on your business's priority list:

Improved Security: Vista includes Microsoft Defender (antispysware) and Internet Explorer 7 (which includes a phishing filter and antispooofing technology), as well as Microsoft Windows Firewall technology—all essential for maintaining your technology infrastructure.

Improved Software Setup and Maintenance: Vista enables you to create and store "images," which are system software configurations that can be easily replicated on new PCs. That means the average time to set up a new PC will be reduced, and upgrading software on existing PCs will be a snap. Add those together and you get a reduction in IT costs.

Instant Search: Search is the name of the game for document-heavy companies. This function should make it easier for you and your employees to find files and documents in a data-intensive environment.

Windows Aero: The new graphical user



Windows Vista™

interface is fast and looks very slick.

Here's a fair warning on Windows Aero: In order to use this feature, you will need to make sure that your computing hardware is "Vista Premium Ready," as opposed to "Vista Capable."

The difference between the two will

be most striking in the graphical interface: Vista on a Vista Capable machine will look more like Windows 2000, but the hardware requirements for it will be significantly less than for Vista Premium Ready. Chances are that equipment you have purchased in the last two years will be Vista Capable. It's also likely that very little of your current equipment is going to be Vista Premium Ready unless you've already been buying higher-end gear.

Microsoft will offer business-class versions of Vista, giving you the choice of which mode you want to operate in. Be sure to match the hardware, software version, and mode to the features you want in your Vista upgrade.

Different Windows Vista Versions

Microsoft will be marketing multiple versions of Windows Vista: two versions for home use, a business and an enterprise version, and an "ultimate" edition. Most small and medium businesses are likely to opt for the business version. It's not clear yet whether the business version will come in Vista Capable or Vista Premium Ready packaging. This is important because Vista Capable hardware does not require a DVD drive, but Vista Premium Ready does.

Microsoft
GOLD CERTIFIED

Partner



Information Technology Professionals

980 South Telegraph Road
Monroe, Michigan 48161
(734) 457-5000 • Fax (734) 457-4332
info@expertsmi.com

Continued on Page 3

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You won't believe what they're doing at work!

Survey Of Over 400 IT Managers Reveals What Employees Are Really Doing During Work Hours... And You Won't Believe What They Discovered!

According to a survey conducted by 8e6 Technologies (www.8e6.com), employees are using company computers, Internet access, email, and other resources to conduct hours of non-work related activities.

Some of these activities simply waste time, like day trading and monitoring eBay bids.

However, many of the activities are downright malicious and threaten their employers' existence and security.

Just look at some of these outrageous real-life stories collected from IT Managers polled:

One employee was caught running a gambling website and acting as a bookie for his coworkers.

To bypass the company's web filter, one employee was caught using his desktop computer as an FTP server for the other employees. He had downloaded and saved over 300 GB of material.

One employee was busted for giving away confidential information such as price lists, contracts, and software code for application development.

Another employee was busted for having a side business stealing and selling company inventory on eBay.

One woman was caught running an online outcall service from her desk.

One employee was caught renting the corporate IP address to hacker friends to generate DOS (denial of service hacker) attacks.

While these scenarios seem outrageous, they are not uncommon. According to a survey outlined in the Seattle Times, of 294 U.S. firms with 1,000 or more employees, almost one-third

of companies have fired an employee in the last 12 months for violating email policies, and 52 percent of companies said they have disciplined an employee for violating email rules in the past year.

As an employer, educating your employees as to what they can and cannot do through an acceptable use policy

is simply not enough.

If the requirements are not enforced, employees will accidentally (or intentionally) violate your rules. That's why every company should look at investing in a good email and web filtering system.

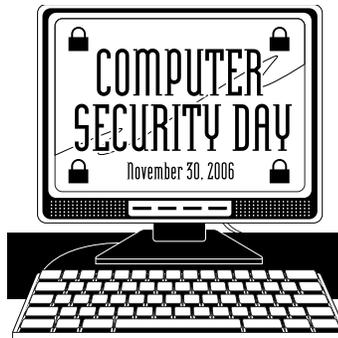
Just having it in place will act as a deterrent for such activities, and if something really is going on — like an employee leaking confidential information to a competitor or sending racial or sexist jokes through your company's email — you'll be able to nip it in the bud before it comes back and bites you in the form of a lawsuit.

Additionally, a good web filter will prevent employees from accessing inappropriate material online, wasting time on non-work related activities, downloading viruses and spyware, and using up company bandwidth to download photos and music.

Software such as Spectorsoft monitor employee Internet usage, accumulating statistics about how much time is spent on certain web pages, logging sites visited, and can block sites based on keywords, addresses, or time of day.

If you would like our help in choosing and setting up an acceptable use policy and a web filtering system for your company, call us at: (734) 457-5000 or send an email message to info@expertsmi.com.

"One employee was busted for giving away confidential information such as price lists, contracts, and software code for application development."





Microsoft Offers Financing For Small and Medium Sized Companies

Keeping your business running at peak productivity and efficiency has a lot to do with keeping your software, services, and hardware current. Now there's a way to get everything you need more affordably with Microsoft® Financing.

Microsoft's approach is unique in that they offer financing for software-centric solutions as well as for more comprehensive solutions that include software, services, and hardware.

Microsoft Financing makes your IT needs more affordable through predictable payments that are spread over the life of your IT investment.

You can now get the benefits of new technology while matching payments to use. In addition, Microsoft Financing helps you:

- Own the hardware purchased outright.

- Acquire all your IT needs cost-effectively.

- Plan your long-term IT investments.

- Streamline the financing process.

- Conserve capital.

- Preserve your financing credit lines.

It is important to note that this is true financing, not a lease, so you own the equipment.

Microsoft will finance a minimum purchase of \$3,000, up to \$100,000 or more.

For example: A new server, with five new workstation computers, Microsoft Small Business Server software, Microsoft Office, installation, training, and ongoing support can be financed for as low as \$235 per month for 60 months.

Give us a call if you're considering an upgrade - we can run numbers for you.

Windows Vista Upgrade Options, Continued

When to Get Windows Vista

Don't be confused by the fact that Office 2007 is going to be coming out at just about the same time as Vista. The two releases are unrelated: You can upgrade to Office 2007 in your current environment—you don't need to move to Vista to use the newest version of Office.

Before you take the Vista plunge, think about these three issues:

First, if you're running an older or unsupported version of Windows, we highly recommend that you think about upgrading as soon as possible.

Second, understand how your current software will operate in a Vista environment. Microsoft has tools available to assist you here, and it's important to use them to test all your applications and ensure that they can run in Vista before you make your move.

This puts a real premium on not only knowing what applications your business runs on a "authorized" basis, but also what software some of your users may have loaded on their own in order to perform day-to-day tasks. Depending on the nature of your business, this practice may be more common than you think.

Third, and probably most important, you need to understand your hardware environment and your plans for upgrading your hardware infrastructure. We've already mentioned the issue regarding DVD drives, but you also need

to examine processor speed, memory, hard drive space and graphics cards in light of any plans you have to move to Vista.

Most equipment purchased in the past couple years should be able to support Vista in the Vista Capable mode.

Your Bottom Line

While every small and medium business starts in a different place, here's our recommendation as to how you approach the Vista-upgrade issue:

Don't buy Vista the day it becomes available, but don't wait more than a year to get started.

Time your decision to be in line with any hardware purchasing pattern you've already established.

Decide now how important Vista Premium Ready features are to your business, and make any incremental hardware purchase decisions consistent with either these or the Vista Capable requirements.

Analyze some of the new hardware/chip features that provide improved performance and reduce IT costs and match that plan up with whatever conclusion you've reached on Vista.

Give yourself a good six months to determine software compatibility with Vista before you begin the migration.

If this sounds confusing or you just plain need help, give us a call. As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, our staff is trained to provide you with the guidance you need to evaluate Windows Vista in your organization.



“We make all of your computer problems go away without the cost of a full-time IT staff!”

Ask us about our fixed price service agreements - Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for, just like rent!



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New, Noteworthy or Need-to-know

WowWee Robots Hit The Big Time!

The nice thing about WowWee’s scary RoboRaptor is that it’s slow. Like most toy robots that walk, it can barely outrun a snail. But the new PEA Bot uses Segway self-balancing technology and can book along at a few miles per hour. Fortunately, it has no snapping teeth.

The bot is about 18 inches high, and it’s the first non-Segway product to use Segway technology. Unlike the full-size Segway, with the PEA Bot, you can dial in varying levels of imbalance, to give the toy a more animated, or drunken, look. There’s also a flip-down cup holder on the bot, so you can use it to send refreshments to a friend across the room. Be sure to turn up the stability first.



Like WowWee’s RoboSapien, the PEA Bot can run either in remote control mode or in programmed semiautonomous mode. It will avoid walls and obstacles and can pick itself up if it falls. However, it has no cliff sensors, so it will drive itself right off a table or a flight of stairs.

The new bot should sell for about \$200 when it ships later this year. Check them out on the web at www.wowwee.com.

You’ve Heard of Local Area Networks.... How About *Body*Area Networks?

Like everything else, implantable medical devices are going wireless. A new in-body antenna chip from Zarlink Semiconductor is in preproduction, and should appear in pacemakers and hearing implants this year.

By transmitting data to and receiving instructions from nearby base stations, body area network (BAN) chips can reprogram your heartbeat at your doctor’s office or make a diagnosis from a bedside wireless monitor at home.

Not only will we be surrounded by intelligent objects in the streets, but we’ll wear clothes made of nano-engineered smart fabrics that will use wearable technology that runs on body heat such as intelligent electronic contact lenses functioning as TV screens when we are in the subway.

Tech Experts Holiday Schedule

Our offices will close for the holidays as shown below. As always, our 24 Hour Computer Emergency Hotline will be available if needed!

Thanksgiving

Closed Thursday, November 23, 2006.

Christmas

Closed Monday, December 25, 2006.

New Year’s Day

Closed Monday, January 1, 2007.

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by Mark Parisi



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