



If Windows 7 is truly the seventh version of Windows, why will its internal version number be “6.1”?

Major changes...

There will be some major changes, but don't get too excited. There are plans to implement “virtualization” in this new operating system. Users who invoke this feature would be able to run multiple copies of Windows 7 on their PC's. That might be helpful to software developers, but most users would have no need for this feature.



The second might take a while to catch on. If the “Sensors” feature is enabled AND applications are re-written to look for “sensor” information when they are running, the application might be able to adapt itself to varying conditions (different location, availability of network resources, etc.) without the computer user's intervention. Don't look for application developers to have any meaningful uses of this feature when Windows 7 debuts.

Other changes...

There are lots of changes, but few, if any are guaranteed to create a lot of excitement among users. Of all of the changes cited by Microsoft, these are the most notable...

- The “Sidebar” is gone. But the gadgets that used to reside in the

sidebar have been migrated to the desktop.

- Anyone who uses the Windows Calculator function will be happy to know that many new capabilities have been added. They include gas mileage, lease/mortgage estimation, conversion of measurement units, and many more.
 - Microsoft Paint has also been “dramatically improved”.
 - WordPad has been upgraded to the point where it might actually be a usable word processor.
 - Windows 7 will ship with Internet Explorer 8, Windows Media Player 12, and a new version of Windows Media Center.
- Users rejoice! User Account Control (UAC) will be totally overhauled to allow users to pick one of four settings:
 1. Never notify the user about any changes to the computer.
 2. Notify the user if a program running on the computer tries to change the computer configuration. If the user initiates the change, no warning message is generated.
 3. Always tell the user if anything changed, but don't request his/her approval.
 4. Always notify the user if anything changes – do not proceed without the user's approval.
- The Windows Security Center will have



a new name and additional functions. Renamed as “Windows Solution Center”, it will also monitor backups, Network Access Protection, and PC maintenance.

- There will be a Troubleshooting control panel that provides a single location for troubleshooting hardware and software problems, network issues, and performance issues.
- Within Windows 7, the Windows Credentials feature claims to have a means to store and manage usernames, logons, and passwords for all web sites that a user might visit. This function also includes a secure storage and retrieval facility.
- According to Microsoft, Windows 7 will make it simpler to use multiple monitors on a single computer.

Our conclusions...

Unless Microsoft is withholding information, Windows 7 doesn't provide much to get excited about. There are improvements to be sure, but we don't see any “must have” features. Our hope is that this operating system will correct the annoyances and shortcoming in Vista. Maybe that's good enough.

But, is it worth waiting for?

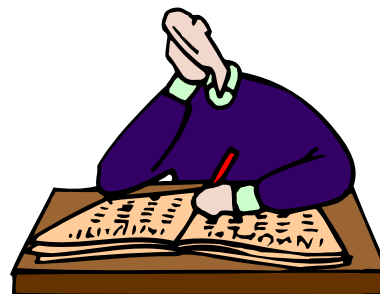
Many organizations are agonizing over whether not they should move to Vista. If Windows 7 is coming, would it not be better to skip Vista and go directly to Windows 7? We don't think so and here are our reasons:

To end-users, Windows 7 won't appear to be that different from Vista. Sure, some things will be different. But, not

that much will change. Vista is here today. The body of knowledge about how to use Vista effectively is expanding daily.

Windows XP is close to the end of its useful life. Microsoft has issued Service Pack 3. Except for an occasional security patch, there will be no more changes to it after the end of this year. Staying with XP is not a good idea.

Most IT pundits recommend that no new Microsoft product -- especially operating systems -- be installed until Microsoft releases the first service pack (SP1) for that product that addresses the majority of problems uncovered since the initial release. If current performance is any indicator of future performance, SP1 for Windows 7 won't be available for 16 months after it is initially released. The initial release of Windows 7 is scheduled for some time in 2010. That puts the availability of Windows 7 SP1 off to mid-2011 – If Microsoft meets its schedule. That's over 3 years away and that is far too long to wait. The life cycle of most computers is 3 to 5 years. Organizations who choose to wait might have computer systems that can't keep up with the demands of the applications running on them. Vista is not perfect, but it does work.





Fighting Spam...

In 2001, spam accounted for an estimated 5% of all email. Now, according to Barracuda Networks, it accounts for 90-95% of all email sent.

There are several ways to control the flow of spam to an email account. Some people download software that can run on their computers. MailWasher, available at <http://www.mailwasher.net> is one of several free programs that tag certain emails based on input from a user and filter questionable emails into a separate folder.

While software solutions are helpful, there are several reasons why it's much better to prevent spam from ever reaching users. Spam eats up a lot of bandwidth. If 95% of your email is spam, your organization devotes a lot of bandwidth to just deal with spam. Bandwidth costs money. If you use anti-spam software that is run on individual machines, that takes up CPU cycles and slows machines down. Also software on individual machines is not always updated regularly. This may be due to a bad Internet connection, a problem with the software or the machine, or many other reasons. It's also possible that the company providing the software does not issue frequent or timely updates. In that case, new spam patterns will not be caught.

At WNYLC, we use two hardware appliances to scan all incoming email for

spam and viruses. The devices back each other up and are on separate data lines. If one of the devices goes down, or if one of the lines goes down, the other is still available and people do not lose any email. The hardware appliances, which are scanners from Barracuda Networks, are self-contained mail servers that communicate with each other and with a network of 70,000 other similar devices around the world. These scanners receive hourly updates for spam and virus definitions, and they receive collective input from individual users. When users anywhere classify an email as spam, a count is kept on the anti-spam network and a score is assigned to identical messages on the network. The score is one factor that determines if email will be classified as spam.

Most spam is blocked by these devices and never reaches users. All messages containing viruses are also blocked. Here is what the statistics look like on just one device, part of the way through a typical weekday:

Email Statistics [inbound]		Clear Statistics	
	Total	Day	Hour
Blocked	40,750,862	25,573	1,691
Blocked: Virus	33,620	10	0
Rate Controlled	984,980	2,916	267
Quarantined	1,351,586	435	32
Allowed: Tagged	97,936	86	4
Allowed	3,251,335	3,362	425
Total Received	46,470,319	32,382	2,419

Users can turn the blocking off and can set the scores at which their email will be blocked or placed into "quarantine." The quarantine folders exist right on the Barra-



cuda devices. Once a day, users are automatically emailed a list of the messages they have in quarantine. By clicking on a link in the message, users can review the quarantined messages and decide if they want them or not. If a user is expecting a message and thinks that it may have been quarantined but doesn't want to wait for the daily message, he or she can log on to the Barracuda at any time and check the quarantine.

All WNYLC mail accounts have access to the WNYLC Barracuda system. Some IOLA funded organizations that do not use WNYLC accounts also run their email through this system to control spam and viruses. IOLA funded organizations in New York state are welcome to use this service. Just email us at wnylc@wnylc.com.

STAR Watch is Going Green!

Western New York Law Center is excited to announce that StarWatch is going green! In efforts to help the environment and become more efficient, our newsletter will only be available online. This will be the last issue of StarWatch that will be printed and mailed to legal services program offices.

We want to make sure that everyone who wants a copy of StarWatch still gets one. For those of you who have www.wnylc.net as your homepage, we will announce the availability of new editions of StarWatch on our homepage and provide a link to the newsletter.

If you wish, we will send you an email telling you when the next edition of StarWatch is available. All you need to do is send an email to us at starwatch@wnylc.com. In the subject area, simply enter the word "Subscribe". When the next edition of StarWatch is available, we will send you an email that contains a link to the newsletter.

If you no longer wish to receive the email notifications, send an email to us at starwatch@wnylc.com with the word "Unsubscribe" in the subject area. We will stop sending email notifications to you.

WNYLC values your privacy. If you provide us with your email address, Western New York Law Center will not give the information to any other organization.



WNYLC Web Statistics For September 2008

Total Hits.....473,587
 Number of Pages Viewed.....165,865
 Total Visitors.....57,309
 Average Hits/Day.....15,786
 Average Pages /Day.....5,528
 Top Web Browsers Used:
 Internet Explorer 7.x.....41%
 Internet Explorer 6.x.....26%
 Firefox.....4%
 Safari.....<1%

Top 5 Operating Systems Used:
 Windows XP.....60%
 Windows 2000.....3%
 Windows Vista.....3%
 Windows 98.....<1%
 Mac OS.....1%



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