

REASONS WHY COMPANIES ARE NOT SKIPPING WINDOWS VISTA



The mere mention of Windows 7 and hints that it will be available in a few years is causing a stir in the press about holding onto Windows XP and skipping Windows Vista altogether.

Certainly, an OS change is a major undertaking, so it is understandable that there's talk about waiting for Windows 7. But a closer look at the benefits that can be derived by adopting Windows Vista now should dismiss any thoughts of waiting.

Specifically, Windows Vista offers:

- Improved security required in today's untamed atmosphere, where hackers run wild stealing identities to commit fraud
- Enhanced mobility features to make it easier for workers outside the office to stay connected
- Capabilities to reduce downtime and improve productivity
- Simplified management necessary for IT to rein in desktop management costs
- Energy efficiency features needed to help organizations reduce their electric bills and become greener corporate citizens.

This paper will discuss these benefits and show why smart organizations have already or are now beginning to migrate to Windows Vista.

SECURITY RULES

A 2007 *Baseline* article noted that the average cost per security breach is on the rise, and that the two main security concerns in most organizations are spyware and employees' ignorance of security.

Fortunately, Microsoft Windows Vista incorporates a number of enhanced and new security features that address both concerns.

One of the main changes in Windows Vista is the User Account Control (UAC) feature, which brings added secu-

rity by reducing the chances of malicious software installing itself, or of a user making a change that might expose a computer to risks.

With UAC, a user runs in standard mode, rather than in local administrator mode. From a practical standpoint, this allows users to perform tasks required for day-to-day business. For instance, a user would be able to install a printer, set up a virtual private network connection, and download and install application updates. However, when a user starts to perform a task such as installing a new application, which requires administrative privileges, the user is prompted to authenticate himself and give explicit consent to perform the operation.

The main benefit of the UAC feature is that companies and IT departments can provide a way for their employees to work on their own, yet still block damaging configuration changes and the installation of malicious applications.

Additionally, Windows Vista features Windows Service Hardening, which restricts critical Windows services from performing abnormal activities that might impact the Windows Registry or file system. The intent of Windows Service Hardening is to make it difficult for malicious software to install itself or attack other computers.

Another feature called BitLocker works with Trusted Platform Module chips to encrypt the Windows disk partition, thus keeping it safe from tampering. This helps prevent an unauthorized user from accessing information. Additionally, it safeguards data if a computer is lost or stolen.

Windows Vista has also proven to be less of a target for hackers than was the case with Windows XP. Data collected by the Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool shows that the infection rate for Windows Vista-based computers is 60.5 percent less than that of computers running Windows XP SP2.3, according to Microsoft.

Additionally, Windows Vista offers enhanced wireless



network security, thereby giving users a warning when they are connecting to an unprotected network. This helps prevent user information or a session being hijacked by an eavesdropping hacker.

Furthermore, Windows Vista will never automatically connect to an unprotected, thus reducing the likelihood of a user inadvertently connecting to a malicious wireless access point.

IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

A number of Windows Vista features help workers do their jobs better, which leads to improved productivity for the entire company.

First, Windows Vista provides workers with instant access to information via its integrated Windows Desktop Search function. Additionally, users can improve the quality of their searches by adding search metadata tags to files.

Second, the combination of services hardening features and UAC helps Windows Vista prevent certain operations from user mistakes or malware from being carried out, thus resulting in fewer user errors and system problems. This reduces downtime, which gives users more opportunities to complete their work.

REDUCED COSTS

Many of the features that improve worker productivity also help keep costs in check. For example, Windows Vista's improved security and greater reliability should reduce the time IT departments' spend in supporting and troubleshooting their computers.

Additional cost savings are realized through power management. Windows Vista works with systems hard-to-deliver enhanced sleep and hibernation capabilities to components including the CPU, disk drives, and monitor. This cuts electricity usage.

Beyond simple power management, Windows Vista allows IT managers to enforce company energy usage policies and best practices. Specifically, Group Policy allows IT

managers to define policies to control more than 35 power management settings and put those policies into effect with little effort.

The savings can be significant. In a report titled "PC Power Management Activation Leads to Significant Power and Cost Savings," Gartner stated that the "total PC power consumption per year for a well-managed 2,500 PC strong organization is 50 percent lower than for an unmanaged one."

BOTTOM-LINE IMPACT

In today's worsening economy, organizations are looking for ways to stay competitive. Windows Vista offers benefits that deliver cost savings and improved productivity every day.

At the same time, as data theft and hacker attacks are on the rise, Windows Vista gives organizations the ability to harden their defenses and prevent the damages of many malicious endeavors.

Naturally, the faster an organization moves to Windows Vista, the sooner it can reap these benefits.

Companies that want to migrate can leverage Dell's real-world customer experience in provisioning Windows Vista using its patent-pending deployment methodologies. Through its work with hundreds of companies, Dell has built up a knowledge base about migration, application compatibility, and best practices.

Dell also offers additional services designed to enable organizations to reap the benefits of improved productivity, security, and data protection quickly. Specifically, Dell offers assessments, image development and management tools and services, custom factory installation services, client migration services, and other services that help companies accelerate the process of getting computers deployed. ●

For more information, go to:
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