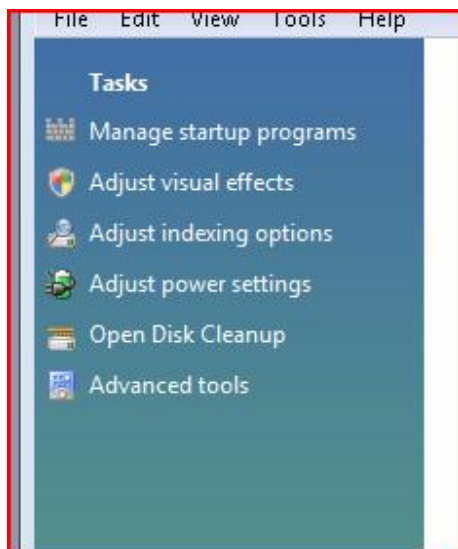


Just the other day I had to tell a customer that I couldn't install his new computer. He bought it at Best Buy and it came with Vista installed on it. He called me to see if I could set it up for him because they wanted \$200 for this service. I certainly could have tried, but I felt it was more ethical to tell him that I didn't have the necessary experience yet and that he would probably be better off having the Geek Squad come out and do the install. I hope all went well.

This experience made me realize that I really needed to learn about Vista as soon as I could so I ordered a copy of the Ultimate version and have been playing with it for a week now. Here are some of my observations.

What I like about Vista:

1. It is very PRETTY.
2. UAC is a great tool for safety – it should help protect from many of the things out there that try to install themselves on your computer. Read more about UAC here <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/windowsvista/aa906021.aspx>.
3. A lot of the stuff is the same – many of the shortcuts I use in XP still work in Vista. Several of the things that are different are actually much better than their XP counterparts. For example, Performance Information and Tools in the control Panel is a central location for all of the following tools. The first tool is the Windows Defender Startup Management and it is much more informative than the MSCONFIG tool we use in XP.



4. OH – By the way, the tool I used to use for snipping screen sections like the one above actually comes as part of the Vista Operating System
5. Scheduled Disk Defragmenting is built in to Vista. It was created by Executive Software, the same company that makes Diskeeper which I love so much for XP. By default it defrags every Sunday night.
6. RocketDock works with it! RocketDock is set to AutoHide and my desktop doesn't have an icon on it and you can really enjoy the beautiful wallpaper. Here is a snippet of the center of the wallpaper. The only other things on the desktop

are the CPU meter and the Weather Gadgets that are part of the Sidebar that comes with Vista. They are shown here also.



7. It installs better than XP and I think XP is great! I installed it on an old Dell computer as an upgrade and then later as a clean install. Both times it found all the hardware drivers without a problem. On the clean install, it took one reboot and an automatic upgrade (no input by me) to pick up the sound and video drivers that had been missed during the initial install.

8. Everything SEEMS to run smoother and better in Vista. I have no empirical data to prove this, it is just a feeling. The test machine is a Dell P4 2.6 Gig with 1 Meg RAM and it seems to be running as fast as my main machine which is an Athalon 64 3500+ with a Gig of RAM. I may try some bench tests to test this and report later.
9. Parental Controls are built into the operating system. They are simple to set up and there are lots of options. You can even prevent certain users from running certain programs – either by name or rating.
10. The Help and Support seems to be much better. With XP, I often went to Google to find answers that I couldn't get from Help and Support. So far, everything I have tried to look up in Help and Support was there with lots of detail where needed.

What I don't like so much about it:

1. It will require money to be able to use all of Vista's potential. I need more memory and a better video card.
2. UAC is a pain when you are trying to set up your computer. It causes lots of pop-up windows asking if you really want to do that and it actually prevented some software from installing all together. I have found myself turning it on and off all the time.
3. There are a lot of differences that I haven't even explored yet.

All in All I am quite impressed with Vista. I think it is at least as much of a step forward as XP was and aside from the cost, I really can't find much to dislike about it. I still wouldn't recommend anyone purchasing it to upgrade their old machine because in most cases you will have to spend money on hardware in addition to the cost of the Software. The best bet is to wait until you need a new computer and purchase one with Vista already installed.

Chuck

Update – I took the plunge and upgraded my main machine after verifying that everything I needed to do on a frequent basis would work. Needless to say, I had problems:

1. I unloaded my antivirus which was not compatible with Vista and loaded AVG 7.5 before the upgrade. AVG7.5 had previously been tested on other machine, so I knew it would work. After the upgrade, I had a mess – AVG would not work – I was getting a license violation on the free version. It would not let me remove or repair it either – thank god for Acronis. I imaged back to XP, removed AVG and upgraded again. I loaded AVG on Vista and all is well. Moral of this storey is that you probably should remove any and all Antivirus, Spyware and Malware tools prior to doing the upgrade – EVEN though the upgrade advisor shows no problems.
2. I had some minor problems with software that proved to be more difficult than I thought they should have been. Moral – run the upgrade advisor

and anything that says you might have even minor incompatibilities should be removed prior to the upgrade. After the upgrade, go to the appropriate web site and follow their instructions.

3. Printers – My HP Photosmart 7960 – this was another example of something that had to be removed prior to upgrade because it couldn't be fixed after the upgrade. HP site said they do not have a Vista driver yet, but they gave specific instructions for a workaround that worked well. Moral – If you have USB printers, disconnect them and remove the software prior to the upgrade. Especially if they use the DOT4 printer port. This is a virtual printer port that doesn't work in Vista.

Did I say it is PRETTY – That was an understatement. I have Aero running on my main machine and it is really beautiful. I cannot believe the difference in the clarity and depth of the display. I can remember back in the 80's when I got my first 256 color display. The difference between the 16 color display and the 256 color display was drastic. Well the difference between my Windows XP display and the Vista Aero display is almost as dramatic and this is with the same hardware. The really amazing thing is that the computer even seems to be running faster even with the increased demand on the OS.