

7 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WINDOWS VISTA

SCENARIO

Markus has been accepted to a local university. He buys a new computer with the latest operating system available -- Windows Vista. He finds the new layout and features impressive and visually pleasing. After connecting to university's network, he learns of additional features Windows Vista offers. It more securely protects his documents from others on the network and is a critical piece of Markus' success at the university. He can use it to manage his schoolwork, entertainment, and use the redesigned search interface to quickly locate his lost assignments.

WHAT IS IT?

Windows Vista is a next generation operating system created by Microsoft. We live in an age where nearly everything is digital—the documents you create, the photos you take, and the music and videos that you enjoy on your PC. Even your daily correspondence with others through e-mail, faxes, and voice mail is digital. Your life is connected to the digital files stored on your PC. Windows Vista introduces breakthrough computing experiences that are both visually exciting and intuitively designed, and will positively change the ways in which you use your PC. With the new desktop experience, you can more efficiently organize and find your information. You can "see" your files and applications in a way that makes sense to you so you can confidently focus on what you want to accomplish. There are several versions of the operating system, each having special features for different types of users, like at home and in the corporate world.

WHO IS USING IT?

New computers that students buy may be coming with Windows Vista preinstalled on it.

You may personally purchase a new PC in the next couple months with Windows Vista on it. Some people may have a little knowledge about computers, some may have quite a bit of knowledge, but one thing is certain, most everyone will want the new operating system on their new computer.

At Ferris, we still need to thoroughly evaluate how well the new OS will work with the hundreds of applications we use for teaching. Projected time for roll out in select areas is Fall 2007, although it will be available to the public shortly.

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

Windows Vista has many significant changes such as:

- Updated graphical user interface and visual style dubbed Windows Aero
- Improved searching features
- Added multimedia creation tools such as Windows DVD Maker
- Redesigned networking, audio, print, and display sub-systems.

Windows Vista is designed to help make you more productive as you work with your PC throughout the day with new features like Windows SuperFetch, Windows ReadyBoost, Sleep, and Windows ReadyDrive. Windows SuperFetch helps manage memory to get the most out of available RAM while Windows ReadyBoost helps make PCs more responsive by using flash memory devices (like USB thumb drives) to boost performance. Windows ReadyDrive takes advantage of new hybrid hard disks—hard disks with integrated flash memory—to help improve battery life, performance, and reliability. The new Sleep state combines the speed of Standby with the data protection features and low power consumption of Hibernate. You can shut down and restart your computer less often by using the new Sleep state with Windows Vista.

One last feature that we will investigate is Internet security. If you do not want file sharing in the class room, and do not want students to share with unknown people outside the lab, Windows Vista provides application-aware outbound filtering, which gives you full, directional control over traffic in the classroom. For example, Windows Firewall in Windows Vista will allow you to block students from peer-to-peer sharing or instant messaging applications in the classroom from contacting or responding to other computers. We will investigate how this might be integrated with our current systems such as NetSupport School.

When you start using Windows Vista, you will recognize familiar elements such as the Start menu, which is now faster, smoother, and more helpful than in previous versions of Windows.

WHAT ARE THE DOWNSIDES?

One of the major downside about Windows Vista is the hardware needed. Windows Vista has significantly higher minimum system requirements than its predecessors. If you want to see if your system is Vista compatible you can download a Vista upgrade advisors (<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/upgradeadvisor/default.mspx>) which will scan you system and tell you what upgrades you would need. However, keep in mind that there will be a staged rollout at Ferris, so you might not see it on your office computer for a while.

HOW DOES IT WORK

The purpose of an operating system is to organize and control hardware and software so that the device it runs on operates in a flexible but predictable way.

WHERE IS IT GOING?

As for the vast majority of PC users, who will be using Vista, systems will evolve to take advantages of some of the intriguing new features, such as ReadyBoost, DirectX 10, and the Desktop Compositing Engine. We're hoping

that the gains in usability and performance of systems based on Windows Vista will make that pain of learning the new features worthwhile. Time will tell.

WHAT IMPLICATIONS ARE THERE FOR TEACHERS?

Students will slowly evolve and learn this new operating system (as they did with Windows 98 to Windows 2000), so as an instructor it would be good to know what the majority of your students work with to provide better direction in computer lab. You may need to review your instructional materials in the future to adjust to the new operating system.

Microsoft offers a variety of suites to address a diverse range of needs. Whether you are a home user or work on the campus network, you will be able to work more effectively. Windows Vista is a great leap forward for the OS, with much improved, far more useful interface: faster, better search: beefed up security that's a big improvement over Windows XP with Service Package 2 and far better networking.

Please watch for university wide and departmental notices about the progress on testing and implementing Windows Vista.. You may also visit the tech support web site for news and information.

<http://www.ferris.edu/techsupport>