



THE RHODENIZER REPORT

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www.rhodenizer.com

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FREE UPGRADE FROM VISTA TO WINDOWS 7

Consumers purchasing a Windows Vista PC from Best Buy after June 26th can upgrade to Windows 7 for free, according to their "Technology Guarantee" program. It states that anyone purchasing a PC with Vista Home Premium, Business, or Ultimate will be entitled to a free upgrade to Windows 7 after public release on Oct. 22.

Best Buy has also begun enthusiastically promoting pre-sales of Windows 7, according to an internal memo that touts the advantages of Windows 7 over Vista. "This new operating system isn't just a 'Vista that works' program – it's a new operating system with improved

productivity, functionality and creativity that uses less computer resources," the memo states. "In simpler terms, this means less waiting, fewer clicks and less complexity for end users," it continues.

Retailers like Best Buy are counting on the pending release of Windows 7 to help revive lagging computer sales. These free upgrade programs are generally meant to convince consumers to not hold off purchasing PCs during the time between when a new product is announced, and when it's actually available for sale. But, Microsoft needs to tread carefully when it comes to upgrade pro-



grams. The company was sued last year by consumers who complained that some Windows XP PCs sold as "Vista Capable" prior to Vista's launch in January 2007 were actually not.

Microsoft currently has plans to release Windows 7 to manufacturers in late July. The versions of Windows 7 expected to ship in the U.S. are: Starter Edition, Home Premium, (CONT. P. 2)

THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- **Buy Vista after 6/26 get free upgrade to 7.**
- **ICANN allows alternative names for ".com".**
- **Social Networking can also be dangerous exposure.**
- **BlackBerry tethering with AT&T didn't work.**

RULES CHANGE FOR INTERNET DOMAIN NAMES

You'll soon be able to use your own company name in place of the current domain name extensions like ".com" or ".org". ICANN, the international regulating authority, will start taking applications for new top-level domain names early next year. This policy change allows companies like IBM or Sony to control their own domains and better exploit their brand names. For example, they will be able to create sites like

"solutions.ibm", or "pc.ibm", and "music.sony", or "tv.sony". This will also give them the ability to create regional subdomains such as "asia.ibm", "us.ibm", or "europe.ibm".

Most companies are still not aware of the recent ICANN policy change, or have little interest in taking advantage of it. However, businesses that are aware see the prospect as very exciting. Global corporations

are expected to apply early for their top-level domain names to secure a higher level of recognition and to own their own name space.

Smaller businesses may find the \$185,000 price tag a bit too steep for now, opting instead to use shared location-specific names such as the new ".atlanta", or ".chicago" extensions expected to be much more affordable.

WHY I DON'T GIVE A TWEET

Kidnapping, stalking, and identity theft are all running rampant in this country for one main reason: Modern society has made it **so** easy.

The social networking movement born from the “me” generation is making child’s play out of what used to be crimes that only the most resourceful criminals could commit. As if there wasn’t enough of our personal information already being spread around networks and databases we have no control over, there is now a cultural phenomenon afoot that encourages people to put every aspect of their lives out on the world wide web. Users of Facebook and MySpace have been targeted by so many scams simply because there has never been such an opportunity to swindle personal information out of such a

large collective so eager to share it.

Now, with Twitter, strangers can even get updates in real time as to where you are, what kind of car you drive, where you like to hang out, and when you’ll be home.

My first test drive through Twitter was an exploratory mission to discover what all the buzz was about. What I found was amazing. People were actually posting intimate details about their lives in full view of complete strangers like me. I decided to try an experiment and picked someone at random in the Atlanta area to follow. Then, I began to Google the names of people and places being mentioned in their “tweets”. Soon, I found their photos on Picasa Web, the schools they go to, the places they hang out, and even de-

tails about their parent’s personal lives that could be used against them. This was enough to convince me that these social networking sites can be dangerous.

In all fairness, Twitter does provide the means for users to make their tweets private, but only if they choose it. Facebook and MySpace also offer options for users to allow viewing by invitation only. The danger is not because of the technology, but because of the carelessness with which it is wielded. Some people forget that more than just their friends are watching.

So, you can “google” me and you can “bing” me, but you can’t “friend” me or “follow” me. And, you’ll never see me give a tweet.



“The danger is not because of the technology, but because of the carelessness with which it is wielded.”

FREE UPGRADE FROM VISTA TO WINDOWS 7 (CONT.)

(CONT. FROM P. 1) Professional, and Enterprise.

Most in the IT Pro community agree that Windows Vista failed to catch on with mainstream users and most businesses have shunned it outright. Windows 7, however, is reported to be considerably lighter on system resources and easier to use than its predecessor. It also includes slick new features like built-in support for touch screens,

and tools that improve desktop searches and PC-to-PC file transfers.

The Windows 7 “Touch Pack” includes Microsoft Surface Globe, a 3-D map of the Earth that users can navigate through with their fingertips; Surface Collage, a digital photo organizer and editing program; and Microsoft Surface Lagoon, an aquatic-themed screen saver in which fish and other marine

creatures react when users touch the screen.

Does this mean everyone should upgrade? Microsoft would love that, but my advice for business owners is to stick with Windows XP Professional a little longer if you can. Many application developers are still dragging their collective feet with compatibility testing and upgrades. They don’t call this “the bleeding edge” for nothing.

“Vista failed to catch on with mainstream users and most businesses have shunned it outright.”

QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

Q— “Everywhere I’ve looked at new PC’s they all have Windows Vista. It looks like we’ll have no choice but to start using it. We had lots of problems with the first one. Before I buy another, is there anything I can do to minimize the disruption to my work?”

A— You don’t have to drag your business into Windows Vista if you don’t want to. There ARE still very good refurbished PC’s for sale with XP Pro, and at discount prices. You just have to know where to look.

Forget the department store PC’s with their high retail markups and shop where the professionals go. Locally, I like MicroCenter or Peachtree Computers for refurbished desktops. Online, I order from NewEgg, or TechOnWeb.

If Windows XP Pro works well for your business needs, stay with it. Save your money. If you want to start the learning curve on a new system, wait for Windows 7 since that will most likely be around longer. Vista is already on the way out and I predict you won’t find it on any new PC’s after the end of this year.

Q— “Thank you for rescuing my PC, but how did so much spyware and viruses get into my computer to begin with?”

A— The number one cause of malware infestation is user

carelessness. I would estimate that over 90% of the malware I’ve removed originated from games, screen-savers, weather gadgets, and free music sharing programs; none of which downloaded themselves. Using your PC strictly as a business tool goes a long way toward keeping it running smoothly. Password protect it and give the kids their own PC.

Internet Explorer is also notorious for being vulnerable to malware attacks and browser hijacking. I never open it for anything unless I have to. No matter what version of IE you have, you would be better off using Firefox. Just go to www.getfirefox.com and download it for free. You’ll be glad you did.

Finally, most antivirus programs do well blocking attacks from the outside. Not all do so well dealing with malware that has already found a way in. Your Norton Antivirus program was attacked and disabled from the inside, then programmed to ignore this virus. That is why every scan detected nothing while your PC was being used as a “bot-net zombie” without your knowledge. Now that we’ve cleaned it and installed Kaspersky, I don’t think you’ll have that problem again.

Q— “What do you think of GoToMyPC as a remote ac-

cess solution?”

A— I think it works fine, but I have a couple of problems with it. First, I don’t want to make payments for something I may or may not use that much. Even at their annual discounted rate of \$179.40, I’m still having a hard time justifying that when I could have an IT Pro set up my own Remote Desktop solution for about \$200 and it’s done. Every year after that is free.

The other problem I see is that you have to allow their software to run continuously in the background on your PC, monitoring their web servers for connection requests. When a remote user logs into their website with your credentials, the request is picked up by your PC and a “three-way” connection is established with their servers in the middle.

So, what’s wrong with that? To put it very delicately: I am convinced that a *faster and more secure* method of remote access involves a direct connection between two PC’s without going through a third party server that I have no control over, and without allowing any additional programs running in the background all the time.—C. R.



“No matter what version of IE you have, you would be better off using Firefox.”

www.getFirefox.com

E-mail your questions to:
questions@rhodenizer.com

BLACKBERRY CORNER

In my last report—I wrote: *“...you can also “tether” the BlackBerry (connect via USB cable) to a laptop PC and use it as a wireless modem to connect to the Internet...”*

A great idea in theory, but my initial testing was too brief. It later proved to be unreliable.

After signing up for the BlackBerry Data Plan w/Tethering (additional \$30 a month with AT&T Wireless), I downloaded their Connection Manager software (v. 6.10) and attempted to use this service. I first hit www.dslreports.com to check download speed. It measured about 1.3Mbps,

which is OK. But, within a few minutes I had lost my Internet connection. My status still showed as “Connected”, but I couldn’t ping any sites and was clearly cut-off. After disconnecting and reconnecting, the same scenario. It worked a couple of minutes, then I was cut-off again. After going through this routine several times, I decided to try the next day in a different location across town. Results there were exactly the same. AT&T tech support had me change all sorts of settings, reboot, even remove the SIM card on my BlackBerry and put it back in again. The con-

clusion he came to was it had to be a firewall on my PC blocking it. I assured him I had already turned my firewall and antivirus off when the problem first started, but this was the only answer he could offer. After upgrading to version 6.12, and trying other workarounds, it was apparent that this was just not working out.

My online research found many others reporting the same problems with the same setup. I finally cancelled the service and my search for a better wireless Internet solution continues.



ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

We are a different kind of IT service provider. We don’t resell any hardware or software. We find the best deals on what you need and pass the savings along to you.

Our mission is to help small businesses reduce expenses, increase productivity, and safeguard private information.

It’s about more than just fixing computers. We also

provide IT consulting and services that include finding the best solutions to your business problems.

We work with clients to prepare disaster recovery plans that ensure their critical data remains safe, yet easily accessible. Additional benefits include money-saving ideas for managing your computer resources and planning for future business expansion.

We have the training, experience, and know-how to provide the right solutions for your needs, and your budget.

Just call to schedule your **free initial consultation with no risk, and no obligation.**

Tell me about your computer needs or IT issues. I’ll recommend a course of action that makes sense for your situation at no cost to you. What have you got to lose?

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