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WINDOWS VISTA IS HERE!

Windows Vista is here and you might be thinking about jumping on the bandwagon with this new OS. Microsoft's latest OS offering has much to draw your attention, especially for a business user. Features such as Bitlocker drive encryption, Shadow Copy, and User Account Protection all work together to make Vista the most secure and stable version of Windows ever while at the same time also being extremely elegant and easy to use. The real question is are you ready for the leap to Vista? There are a few questions you must answer to decide if you can and/or should change to Vista. It is our hope that the following information will help you make these decisions.

Can I Upgrade?

Lets face facts, unless you have purchased your computer fairly recently it may not be able to run Vista with all the features you want if at all. Vista's new features and snazzy interface take a certain degree of computer muscle to operate at their full potential and provide you with a pleasing user experience. According to a Microsoft, there are two categories for Vista compliance. PCs that are "Vista Capable" (meaning able to run the OS but not necessarily with all special features enabled) would meet or exceed the following specs:

- 800MHz or faster processor
- 512MB of RAM
- 20GB hard drive (with 15GB free)
- A DirectX 9 capable video card

The second category is "Vista Premium Ready" (meaning able to run with most or all features enabled including the the new advanced user interface known as Aero). This PC would meet or exceed the following specs:

- 1GHz processor
- 1GB of RAM
- 40GB hard drive (with 15GB free)
- A modern DirectX 9 video card with at least 128MB of video RAM
- DVD Drive
- Audio Output
- Internet Access

Also note that some hardware and software that you currently use may not be Vista compatible. It is a very good idea to browse on the Internet to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/windowsvista/buyorupgrade/upgradeadvisor.aspx> to download and run the Vista Upgrade Advisor so that it can help you pinpoint potentially incompatibal hardware and software before you upgrade.

Which Version Should I Get?

A very important aspect about Vista is that there are five different versions of it but all of the different versions are included on the DVD regardless of the version you purchase. This allows you to expand the feature set as needed. The following is a summary of the different Vista versions to help you decide what you need and want:

Home Basic - For those content to browse the web, use email, and create and edit basic documents from their PC. Includes destop search and security tools.

Home Premium - Includes everything in Basic but also includes the Aero graphical interface, Media Center functionality, and ability to connect to Xbox 360. The version most of us will own at home.

Business - The basic version for companies of all sizes with tools to help organizations manage their PCs

Enterprise - Includes everything in the basic business version with improved encryption and BitLocker system to keep data from being read on a stolen computer.

Ultimate - All the features of Home and Business in one plus some added bonuses.

To help simplify the decision a bit it is recommended that most home users will want to get Home Premium unless your computer is not powerful enough for the Aero interface in which case you would need to use Home Basic. All business users should be running on at least Vista Business if your systems are powerful enough to run it and the apps you use are compatible with it. If you need extra security and data protection then you would probably want Vista Enterprise.