



WINDOW TREATMENTS

Microsoft Windows 7 offers new features and greater usability

Microsoft has released its latest software operating system, Windows Version 7, and as an avid beta tester and user, I can tell you the upgrade is worth having.

Windows 7 has the quickness of Windows XP, the eye candy of Windows Vista, and the usability of the Mac operating systems.

Laptop users will welcome the faster boot and shutdown times, as well as the hot keys for presentations, like hitting Windows Key “P” to project to an external projector.

Those who have dreaded the change from XP to Vista will find the modified layout intuitive, easy-to-use and very functional. A variety of tools and shortcuts exist to move Windows around your desktop in a process that increases workflow. For example, you can put two documents side-by-side by using the Windows Key “Left Arrow” or the Windows Key “Right Arrow.” This is a welcome feature as it allows the user to compare documents quickly.

Although Microsoft offers a path for Vista users to upgrade to Windows 7 and keep their currently installed programs and settings, I would highly recommend using the fresh install feature. The primary reason for this is that the fresh install creates a new windows registry file, rather than causing you to inherit your bloated Vista registry file. A new registry will translate to faster operations.

Microsoft does not offer a Windows XP to Windows 7 upgrade path, but you can replace XP with Windows 7 by reformatting—a tool that Windows 7 offers during the upgrade process. Plan to spend at least 45 minutes, and possibly as long as 3 hours, to install Windows 7. Before you install, make sure you backup all of your data files and Outlook files, favorites and key settings. Two additional recommendations for preparing your computer for the next few years of Windows 7:

- Consider replacing and upgrading your hard drive—a 500 gigabyte notebook hard drive can be found for \$100-\$125.
- Be sure to de-authorize Adobe Acrobat before you reinstall—it doesn’t provide an option to authorize your new install, which could leave you stuck purchasing an updated copy.

There are three versions of Windows 7 now available—Home, Professional and Ultimate. Prices start at \$119. For more information on Windows 7, visit www.microsoft.com.



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