



An Everdream White Paper - March 2007

Vista Readiness: Preparing for the Journey

WHITE PAPER

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Microsoft Windows Vista - the biggest event in five years in the PC industry is now underway. Launched for business users in November 2006 and for consumers in January 2007, Vista will eventually become a part of your world. Are you overwhelmed with what it will take to migrate? People, time, budget? When will this fit in to your strategic and operating plans? Or are you just not thinking about it and will look into it next year? No matter where you are at, Vista is going to have an impact and you need to understand what that will be on your organization. This brief provides a summary of Vista and tips on how to prepare for the journey into the Vista frontier. Whether you are running Vista PCs today or are only planning on using them in 2008, the time is now to understand what you have in your environment and what it will take to move to a Vista world.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF VISTA

After the launch of Windows XP in 2001, Microsoft immediately began development on their next generation operating system codenamed "Longhorn". Five years later, Vista was made available for business users in November 2006 and for consumers in January 2007. Now the question is what will be the adoption of Vista given that many organizations have standardized on Windows XP and find their environments to be working fairly well. Chances are most organizations are spending a lot of time, money, and resources to keep their XP desktop and laptop environments running but the prevailing question being asked by most organizations is what is the risk of moving from what they currently have to something new.

Everyone is trying to quantify when mass adoption will take place. In a December 2006 article in eWeek, top on the minds of IT workforce experts was Vista and questions such as:

- > How quickly will organizations adopt Vista?
- > What issues will organizations run into while transitioning?
- > How quickly will IT professionals be expected to have more than a basic understanding of the way Vista works?

In November 2006, a CDW survey of 761 IT managers from businesses, government, and educational institutions revealed that only 20% of respondents would begin a Vista migration within 12 months.

On top of all this, Gartner Group discovered that most businesses would not start the deployment of Vista until the end of 2007 with large enterprises not starting until the second quarter of 2008.

Chances are that many businesses will not begin production deployment until the first service pack for Vista is made available which is anyone's guess at this time. An important point to remember is that consumer adoption in 2007 will most likely outpace business adoption given that all newly purchased machines will ship with Vista. As with many technologies these days, consumers oftentimes expect the same technologies in their business lives as what they use in their personal lives. This may have an unexpected impact to Vista adoption in the workplace.

CUTTING THROUGH THE VISTA CLUTTER

No matter where you are in the Vista adoption timeframe, you will need as much information at your fingertips to help you understand:

- > What are the new features in Vista?
- > Do these new features add value to my organization?
- > What is the cost of migrating to Vista?
- > What is the return-on-investment of a Vista migration?

"Everdream's striking numbers demonstrate that upgrading to Windows Vista may prove to be even more difficult than originally anticipated. Consumers and business buyers alike should be very careful about the labels that they'll see on systems nowadays — a system that is Windows Vista *capable* doesn't necessarily translate to one that is Windows Vista *enjoyable*."

Mark Minasi

Technology columnist and author of *The Complete PC Upgrade and Maintenance Guide*

To help you understand what Vista has, the different versions, and what may be right for you, Paul Thurrot's SuperSite for Windows provides an excellent review of Vista especially at the feature level.

Once you have figured out the Vista features that will deliver value to your organization, then you will have to understand the cost of migration especially for hardware and software.

Through an Everdream survey of nearly 145,000 desktop and laptop PCs, we concluded that there is a significant lack of readiness for Vista from a hardware perspective. When looking at Microsoft's recommended requirements for Vista:

Recommended Requirements (Premium-Ready PCs):

- > 1 GB RAM
- > 1 GHz microprocessor
- > 40 GB hard drive
- > 15 GB free hard drive space

The survey concluded that:

- > 69.5% of machines do not have the required RAM
- > 62.4% of machines do not have the required hard drive
- > 18.4% of machines do not have the required free hard drive space
- > 6.7% of machines do not have the required processor speed
- > 79.9% of machines do not meet at least one of the above listed requirements
- > 93.8% of companies have at least one machine that does not meet the above requirements

Whether it is simply adding RAM, upgrading the hard drive, or buying a new machine, a majority of machines out in use today are not ready for Vista and there will be a significant cost to migration.

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

With the desire to learn more about your environment so you can estimate the costs of migration, here are a few simple tips to help you prepare for the journey to Vista:

1. Tune Into Your Environment

Do you know exactly what is in your desktop and laptop environment? Is your asset inventory not up-to-date because you have manual tracking processes? To get to the overall cost of migration, you need to know about all of your systems and the software that is installed. To tune into your environment, look into a service such as Everdream that does not require any installation of an on-premise asset management system. With Everdream, all you need to do is deploy the lightweight, unobtrusive Everdream agent to each of your PCs for a complete set of asset information. You will then know how many of your machines do and do not have the required RAM or required hard drive or required processor.

2. Estimate the Cost of Change

Now that you have the pulse of your desktop and laptop environment, you can use that information to estimate the cost of migrating to Vista. Start with the cost of hardware. As mentioned above, a majority of systems out there do not have enough RAM for the productive use of Vista. Put your systems into two buckets – those which need minor hardware upgrades, e.g. RAM or upgraded hard drive, and those which need a major hardware upgrade or replacement, e.g. processor upgrade or two or more of the requirements are not met. By doing so, you can cost effectively migrate by leveraging your existing hardware. Next you have to look into your software being used. By using an on-demand software service such as Everdream to tune into your environment, you will also understand what software is out on your machines and what is

currently being used. Start with looking at the most frequently used software packages and go to the manufacturer's website to see if the version you use is Vista compatible. Chances are you will need a new version so you will have to estimate the cost of upgrading those systems with the software package and have to see what your current support agreement is that is in place. With an on-demand desktop management system like Everdream, this will be easier in terms of distributing software and managing licenses.

3. Plan Your Migration Strategy

Once you have an idea of the cost of change for your organization, you can plan your strategy for migration. By looking at the people and budget needed to move to Vista, you will have a better idea of the type of migration strategy you want to take:

- > Slow Migration – If the majority of your hardware environment is not Vista capable, then you should start the process of buying new machines over time or simply fold it into your natural upgrade cycle. Once you have a critical mass of Vista-capable machines, you can start introducing Vista into your environment.
- > Fast Migration – If the majority of your hardware environment is Vista capable, then you may be able to accelerate your adoption of Vista if you see the value in the new features. This cost will be more in terms of the people required for the migration as well as the disruption to end user productivity.

As you can see, there are only two migration strategies to take. Over time there will not be a choice as Microsoft begins to discontinue prior operating systems such as Windows 98 and Windows 2000. You will need to decommission machines to bring them up to speed.

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ABOUT EVERDREAM

Everdream Corporation is the market leader in delivering cost effective, low risk on-demand desktop management services that enable greater asset visibility, ensure business uptime and deliver high end-user satisfaction, while significantly reducing the total cost of ownership of corporate PCs. Built around a powerful and cost effective Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform model, Everdream delivers a comprehensive set of software services via a single, integrated management console, enabling companies to manage their mobile, distributed workforces via the web anytime from anywhere in the world. Combined with its "Try, Buy, Deploy" self-service model, Everdream helps organizations such as UPS Stores, ADP, Brocade Communications, Korean Airlines, Midas International, Salesforce.com, Sonic Automotive, Sylvan Learning Centers and others to quickly and easily deploy, activate and manage the desktop management functions required to achieve maximum compliance, greater desktop protection and employee satisfaction. For more information, visit the Everdream Web site at www.everdream.com or call 888-307-7299.

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