

# **WINDOWS VISTA® READINESS:**

**PREPARING FOR  
THE JOURNEY**

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Microsoft® Windows Vista - one of the biggest events in the last five years in the PC industry is now underway. Launched for business users in November 2006 and for consumers in January 2007, Windows Vista may eventually become a part of your world. With the recently published Windows Vista Service Pack 1, you may be considering a move sooner rather than later. 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, Windows Vista is going to have an impact and you need to understand what that will be on your organization. This white paper provides a summary of Windows Vista and tips on how to prepare for the journey into the Windows Vista frontier. Whether you are running Windows Vista PCs today or are only planning on using them within the next year or 18 months, the time is now to understand what you have in your environment and what it will take to move to a Windows Vista world.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF WINDOWS VISTA

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

According to a March 2008 survey conducted by Ziff Davis Enterprise Editorial Research for eWeek, just 2 percent of respondents said that Windows Vista is the primary desktop operating system at their company. In contrast, 92 percent said Windows XP is their primary operating system. 72 percent of the survey's respondents also said that the operating system they are currently using is the one they expect to be using in 2009. This clearly demonstrates that many businesses have been hesitant about changing their existing environment and making the move to a new operating system. This however is nothing new in the world of desktop operating systems as similar behavior was demonstrated by businesses when Windows XP was released.

Since the release of Windows Vista over one year ago, other forces have come to light that may be spurring increased adoption of Microsoft's latest operating system. According to the survey mentioned above, 34 percent of respondents said the primary driver for Windows Vista would be hardware pre-loaded with the OS. As businesses look at refreshing hardware that is nearing the end of its lifecycle, Windows Vista will come pre-loaded on new PCs and may experience increased traction. In addition, a large number of respondents wrote in responses saying that the primary driver for Windows Vista was the realization that Microsoft would eventually cut support for XP. Microsoft has not officially announced when XP will be de-supported and they do have plans to release Service Pack 3 for Windows XP in 2008 but the lack of XP support is clearly a concern that may spur on adoption. The most recent event that may have the biggest impact on Windows Vista adoption is the release of Service Pack 1 for Windows Vista. Released on March 18, 2008, Windows Vista Service Pack 1 is the first major update to Microsoft's latest operating system and is a collection of bug fixes, minor functional changes, and other additions to Windows Vista. As was the case with Windows XP, the expectation is that this service pack will make Windows Vista more stable, secure, and usable as a replacement for Windows XP.

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## CUTTING THROUGH THE WINDOWS VISTA CLUTTER

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

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

To help you understand what Windows Vista has, the different versions, and what may be right for you, Paul Thurrot's SuperSite for Windows provides an excellent review of Windows Vista especially at the feature level. To access this site along with other relevant information concerning Windows Vista, visit Dell's Vista Readiness website at <http://www.everdream.com/vista/microsoft-windows-vista-upgrade.aspx>.

Once you have figured out the Windows 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 a Dell survey of nearly 145,000 desktop and laptop PCs, there appears to be a significant lack of readiness for Windows Vista from a hardware perspective. When looking at Microsoft's recommended requirements for Windows Vista:

Recommended Minimum 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, many of machines currently in use today are not ready for Windows 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 Windows 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 Dell's™ Inventory Assessment that does not require installation of an on-premises asset management system. With Dell, all you need to do is deploy the lightweight, unobtrusive Dell agent to each of your PCs for a complete set of asset information. You can then discover how many of your machines meet the minimum requirements for Windows Vista migration.

## 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 Windows Vista. Start with the cost of hardware. As mentioned above, many currently utilized systems out there do not have enough RAM for the productive use of Windows Vista. Put your systems into two buckets – those that need minor hardware upgrades, e.g. RAM or upgraded hard drive, and those that 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 using your existing hardware. Next you have to look into your software being used. By using an on-demand service such as Dell's Inventory Assessment 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 Windows 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 consider the terms of your current support agreement. An on-demand desktop management system like Dell offers helps make it easy to upgrade software packages and manage 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 Windows 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 Windows 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 Windows Vista-capable machines, you can start introducing Windows Vista into your environment.
- > Fast Migration – If the majority of your hardware environment is Windows Vista capable, then you may be able to accelerate your adoption of Windows 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.

By better understanding your PC environment, estimating the cost of change, and taking a methodical approach to migration, you will be able to make the most of Windows Vista and ensure that it delivers the value required by your business.

## **ABOUT DELL**

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