

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Dec. 01, 2008

From the Dec. 2008 Issue

I'll probably date myself by asking, but do you remember this old Animals tune? When it comes to Windows Vista, and the anti campaign waged by rival Apple Computer, there is a LOT of misunderstanding associated with Microsoft's current desktop operating system. It's easy to buy in to all the hype and just assume that Windows Vista is bad, but that's not a prudent approach for a couple of reasons. Reason number one: Don't believe everything you hear or read (hey, not even this column). Reason number two: You simply can't purchase XP any longer (yes, there are still some copies available, and yes you can still purchase new computers with XP at least for now, but Microsoft officially stopped selling XP retail and OEM copies as of June 30 of this year).

Let's move on to the misunderstood Windows Vista. I'll refer to the following points as the five misunderstood features in Windows Vista. They are in no particular order.

USER ACCOUNT CONTROL

There is no question that UAC (sometimes affectionately referred to as User Annoyance Catastrophe) has received a bad rap and plenty of misunderstanding. It must be frustrating for those Microsoft developers to get constant chiding for the lack of security in their operating systems to which they respond with a significantly more secure OS, only to be chided more for the added annoyance associated with better security. Security has always been at odds with usability. Think of your house: It would be much easier to leave the doors and windows open all the time and save the money associated with alarm systems and security monitoring, but you probably wouldn't feel very safe. Vista, with UAC

enabled, distinguishes between standard user mode and local administrator mode.

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

XP and Windows 2000. Let's face it, technology changes, and you shouldn't expect new technology to perform on old hardware. Prudent firms are moving to Vista systematically as hardware is replaced. For example, the new Search component

and the anti-spyware utility Windows Defender require a larger amount of physical memory (RAM). Since these technologies were not part of XP, running Vista on the same piece of hardware will naturally provide for a slowdown. How much memory

is enough? Vista 32-bit supports up to 4GB, and I'd plan on a minimum of 2GB. If you can afford it (and memory is relatively inexpensive), 3GB to 4GB would be better.

THIRD-PARTY DRIVERS AND APPLICATIONS

Another misunderstood annoyance with Vista is the fact that some 'legacy' (read: old) hardware devices don't work with Vista. Microsoft was quite open about the direction of Vista with hardware and application vendors many years before the operating system was released. Still, natural procrastination happens, and many of these various vendors delayed their development efforts for Vista until after its release. It's simply not fair to blame Microsoft for this. To be fair, Microsoft does change its direction during development, and the contention by third-party hardware and application vendors that they could invest a lot of work into development only to have the direction change negating much of that work is a real concern.

SEARCH

I've written before about the "time is money" concept. I think most accountants get this and see value in any technology that can make accomplishing a task more efficient. Search in Vista is a perfect example of such a technology.

In Vista, unlike XP, the search engine is set up as a service rather than an

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

no more drilling down through menus to launch an application or to find a data file.

64-BIT ARCHITECTURE

Again, I'm probably dating myself here, but I remember 16-bit computing. It was hard to leave 16-bit computing for 32-bit computing, but I wouldn't go back now. And 64-bit computing is definitely the direction of the future. I've heard several Microsoft employees state that Windows Server 2008 will be the last 32-bit server operating system. It would be reasonable to think this also applies to Vista. The 32-bit version of Vista only supports a maximum of 4GB of physical memory, for example, while the 64-bit version can access 128GB of memory. In addition, 64-bit processors are standard in almost all machines shipping today, and they have been shipping previously to the release of Vista. For example, there was a 64-bit version of XP. The real consideration for practicing accountants and 64-bit architecture is whether or not applications and peripherals will operate. It's important to test your applications and peripherals in a 64-bit environment or have confirmation from the hardware or application vendor that it will operate normally. The 64-bit versions of Vista include a process for running 32-bit applications, but you need to be sure and verify first. All logoed Vista device drivers are required to have both 32-bit and 64-bit versions, so purchasing a logoed device will provide 64-bit confirmation.

An excellent tool is available to assist in the evaluation of your environment for Vista. The Microsoft Assessment and Planning tool can be downloaded from the following URL: [www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=67240b76-3148-4e49-943d-4d9ea7f77730&DisplayLang=en)

[FamilyID=67240b76-3148-4e49-943d-4d9ea7f77730&DisplayLang=en](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=67240b76-3148-4e49-943d-4d9ea7f77730&DisplayLang=en).

The tool performs a hardware inventory, compatibility analysis and readiness report to insure good Vista migrations.

For this author, Vista is a welcome improvement to XP. Like with anything

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved