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is not a matter of luck. But for end users of Microsoft's various desktop operating systems software, the recent past has been anything but lucky.

The Company's very popular XP operating system was updated with the release of Window's Vista in late 2006 (to business customers, and officially launched to consumers in January of 2007). For those who took the chance on Vista, most were very disappointed. Microsoft met its design goals with Vista by increasing the protections built into the software providing a significantly more secure computing platform. The flip side of achieving this design goal was the constant popups and warnings that end users just didn't appreciate — even given the increased level of protection.

As a result, the Vista operating system all but died almost from the get-go. Sales were, at best, lack-luster despite claims by Microsoft that sales were outpacing the initial release of XP. Press reports continued to degrade the software, and consumers and businesses alike shunned opportunities to purchase Vista.

This wave of negative publicity and badmouthing around the water cooler prompted Microsoft to embark on an interesting marketing campaign referred to as the Mojave Experiment. The Mojave Experiment essentially answered the question: "What do people think of Windows Vista when they don't know it's Windows Vista?" To answer the question, Microsoft's Advertising Agency, disguised Vista as 'the next Microsoft Operating System' codenamed, 'Mojave.' The results were stunning: 94 percent of respondents rated the 'new operating system' higher than they initially rated Windows Vista, and of 140 respondents polled (on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 was the highest rating), the average pre-demo score for Windows Vista was 4.4

while the average post-demo score for ‘Mojave’ was 8.5. In reality,

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spanned over two years.

This release was received almost universally by the press and others with glowing reviews. “With its Windows 7 OS, Microsoft gets the basics right. It just works,” said PC Advisor and “Windows 7 is more than what Vista should have been, it’s where Microsoft needed to go,” said CNET editors.

I received my first copy of Windows 7 during a trainer summit in Redmond (Microsoft’s world headquarters) in January of 2009. Coincidentally, this was also the week where 1,500 Microsoft employees received pink slips — the first such layoffs in the company’s history. There was significant skepticism on my part, and I wasn’t alone. But I loaded the beta build on my laptop to see what was in store for the future. To my surprise, my three year old laptop actually performed better than it did running Vista. All of my hardware devices were recognized with the exception of a biometric fingerprint reader, and about 30 minutes after the installation, I had a message in the ‘Action Center’ (Windows 7’s utility for providing help with such things) directing me to the fingerprint reader manufacturer’s website where a beta driver was available. Clicking on that link took me right to the driver I needed, which installed without issue. Very impressive.

Subsequent to that first experience, I loaded the software on a small form factor Netbook machine with only 1GB of memory. This machine was designed for Windows XP, but I wanted to test its limited hardware with Windows 7. Again, to my surprise, performance was very acceptable — more acceptable than the small 9-inch screen.

There have been many benchmark performance tests completed, and some show

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