This Month At NOPC

25 Years of the Personal Computer by Ray Paternostro

Inside this issue:

Windows Vista; A Preview

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.,
Member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida
Bwsail(at)yahoo.com
http:www.spcug.org

As you all probably know by now, Vista is the next version of Windows that Microsoft will be releasing. It was supposed to be available this November, but it's release has been postponed to after January 1, 2007. However, that 2007 release date relates to the non-business versions of Vista. In other words, the versions that most of us will be using. The "enterprise" or business versions are expected to be shipped this November, unless something else slips.

As Dr. Goldstein pointed out in last month's "Bits & Bytes", there will be more than one "consumer" or Home edition. You should realize that the six versions of Vista that are expected are really only two more than are currently available in Windows XP. In XP you have the Home and Professional versions plus the Multimedia and Tablet PC versions. In Vista you will have Vista Starter, Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium and Vista Ultimate. (Please remember that these names may change by the time Vista is actually released.) The non-consumer versions will be Vista Business and Vista Enterprise. I will limit the scope of this article to the consumer versions of Vista.

Now for a disclaimer. Although I have a beta copy of Vista, I have not yet installed it on my computer. I do have a large enough partition I could install it and dual-boot my machine. However, current anti-virus, firewall and anti-Trojan software will not run on Vista. There are not yet any new versions of these security programs available for Vista. Consequently, I have no intention of installing this Vista software on my main

August Meeting

The program for the August monthly membership meeting of the New Orleans Personal Computer Club will be "25 years of the Personal Computer", presented by long-time club member and current president Ray Paternostro Jr. It will be a slideshow presentation showcasing how technology of the Personal Computer and its peripherals has evolved over the past 25 years,
from the IBM PC model 5150 in 1981 to the 4 gigahertz Intel and AMD powered computers of today. The club will also have a few giveaways on hand so come out and join us on August 2nd with friends and family.
Mark your calendars with a red/green pen, create an entry in your Palm Pilot, HP or Dell pocket PC, update Outlook (all versions) and join us on Wednesday, Aug 2, 2006. The monthly meeting of the NOPCC starts at 6:30pm on the first Wednesday of every month. Location of the meeting is the J.D. Meisler school cafeteria at 3700 Cleary Ave. Metairie. Use the entrance through the breezeway on Pharr Street.

(Continued from page 1)

working computer. I have just acquired a second-hand system that I intend to use with nothing but Vista and connect to the Internet only when absolutely necessary. So this article is being written based on the most reliable sources I have been able to find that have been testing the beta version of Vista. After I return from my two months road-trip, I'll start working with the Vista beta. For those not familiar with the term "beta", this refers to pre-production software or a testing version of software that is not yet ready for the market.

Now, back to the various versions of Vista. The Starter edition is a very low end version that will support only 32 bit software. Its exact limitations don't seem to be available yet. So, we'll just have to wait and see what Microsoft does with this version of Vista. It is fairly certain that it will not support the new graphics interface called "Aero". In fact, it doesn't appear that the Home Basic edition will support this new graphics interface either. However, Home Basic will require a minimum of 512MB of RAM. From most reports it appears to me that Vista running on less than 1 GB of RAM will be seriously slow. Just like computers that try to run XP on only 128 MB of RAM.

So what does Aero offer the average computer user? If you have a 3D graphics card with enough video RAM (128 MB or more), then Aero will provide an entirely different appearance on your screen. (Some commentators have compared the Aero graphics interface to that of the Apple Macintosh OS X!!) Graphics designers refer to some of the capabilities as transparency, blurring, window previewing, and graphical rollover indicators. The easiest way to describe some of the effects is to provide some examples. The minimize, maximize and close indicators that you find in the upper right corner of your current window will change color as you pass your mouse over them. And this color will spill out around the edges of the icon. This gives you an additional visual indicator when your mouse is in the right position. Another example is when you place you mouse on the shortcut on the taskbar you will see a thumbnail view of the program. So when you are multi-tasking you can easily see which application you want. Or, you can check on the progress of a video feed or other running processes. Some other advantages of Aero are the ability to see "around the edges" of windows to the windows behind. This involves the transparency and blurring referred to earlier. This is advantageous to those who do multi-tasking. This ability is also apparently built-in to the new tabbed interface being included in Internet Explorer 7. There is also a change to the Alt-Tab function which allowed users to tab through the list of running programs to find the one

they wanted to shift to in earlier versions of Windows. In Vista this function, now called Flip, allows users to see a larger thumbnail view of open programs. There may also be a related 3D view which will show all the open windows twisted to a 45 degree angle. The user can then cycle through the windows by repeatedly pressing the Tab key.

The Aero graphics will be incorporated in the Home Premium and Ultimate versions. However, it requires a minimum of 128 MB of fast video RAM, DX9 3D support and a minimum of 1 GB of system RAM. Some comments have led me to believe that it will not work with motherboards that use shared RAM for the video function. It requires a separate graphics card. Also, I would never recommend trying to run a system with these minimums. They should both be doubled at the very least. If your PC doesn't have this capacity, then you will still be able to run Aero, but in a limited or basic mode. It will not display all the features found in the full Aero mode.

There have been a number of articles related to hardware requirements to run Vista. In my mind, I think it's a little early for these specs to be firm. One thing you can be sure of, Vista will require more RAM, a large hard drive and a fast central processor. Both Intel and AMD are touting their latest generation of processors as being necessary for running Vista. It does appear that current single core processors will be able to run Vista in 32 bit mode. I suspect that at some later date you will need to consider a dual-core 64 bit processors or a 32 bit processors that runs hyperthreading. Naturally, the 64 bit processor will have a definite advantage in running Vista.

The other questions is, how well will Vista run current 32 bit software? Most of the new computers currently being manufactured have 64 bit processors. These are designed to work with both 32 bit and 64 bit operating systems. Vista will be a 64 bit OS. There are very few 64 bit software applications available and most of your current software is, or should be, 32 bit. It is expected that "well behaved" 32 bit software will run on Vista without problems. Only those applications that don't install system level drivers or try to take control of the OS are considered well-behaved. You will have to replace your anti-virus and firewall software. That is a given. New Vista applications should be available when Vista comes on the market. The same is true of anti-trojan/anti-parasite software. Other software that might be a problem would include video games and multimedia applications. Those of you who have been running Windows for a few years and have upgraded from earlier versions are already fa-

(Continued from page 2)

miliar with one of the real road blocks to getting started with a new OS. That's right – device drivers! Every device driver for your hardware like printers, scanners, external USB drives, etc, will have to be re-written. Early adopters of Vista will have similar problems.

Windows XP runs 16 bit software in "Windows on Windows" (WOW) emulation mode. Vista will run 32 bit software in much the same way using an emulation layer to talk to the software. This converts the 32 bit program calls to 64 bit code. This process should be transparent to the user. Now, if you still have some 16 bit software or DOS software, it really is time to upgrade. These will not run on Vista without the use of third-party emulation software. There is no indication that Microsoft will support 16 bit or DOS applications.

Now the next topic is one that is really of primary interest with this Windows upgrade. It is also the one for which the least info is available. That is – Security! Windows XP and Internet Explorer have developed quite a reputation for being full of security holes. In spite of all the efforts to plug the gaps, new ones keep showing up. Microsoft has indicated that Vista will be far more secure than previous versions. The problem is that in trying to tighten the security net, Microsoft seems to be making things more difficult for the average user. With XP Home, the user generally operates in an administrator mode so that new applications can be installed and unused ones removed without having to set up additional permissions. With both XP Home and XP Professional, Microsoft has tried to get individual users to use a limited non-administrator mode on a regular basis. This has been singularly unsuccessful. The reason for running in the limited user mode is to prevent malware from accessing system applications in the Windows director and sub-directories and/or the registry. When the computer is set up so that accessing these functions requires a password, less damage can be done, by any outside influence, to the operating system or to the installed applications. However, because the limitations of the user mode are so great, most Windows users end up running in the administrator mode to simplify making changes to their computer. Well, it appears that Microsoft is going to change that. Vista will enforce the limited user or user account control (UAC) to prevent the user from having constant access to administrative functions. Microsoft obviously doesn't believe that users can be allowed unlimited access to their own computers. Included in this there may be increased blocking of online software distribution. You may get more pop-up warnings when your installed software tries to access the Internet. Nearly all applications need to access the Internet at one time or another.

This gives them the capability to download updates, patches, bug fixes and other security related information. Many applications also need to hook into the operating system in ways that are similar to those used by malware. If your operating system is constantly popping up warning windows and telling you that your computer is at risk, how would you react? Especially if responding to these warnings by clicking on "Cancel" closes the program and prevents you from using an application. You may try to go back and run all of your applications as an "Administrator" as you did in XP. However, Vista has various levels of "Administrator" and may still require you to enter a password for non-Microsoft applications. Now for the caveat: Vista is not yet in final beta form, therefore there can be many changes, especially in the security setup. It will depend in part, on the comments from the testing community. Hopefully not all of them will be system administrators for large corporations. What Microsoft has admitted in one of their own tech articles is that "Windows services represent a large percentage of the overall attack surface in Windows". That is a direct quotation. So if Windows is the problem why are they trying to solve it by limiting the ability of users to use their computers and their software?

Over the coming months I will continue to provide updates on my own experience with Vista as well as information I obtain from other beta testers. We'll see just how much benefit we'll really get from this Windows upgrade.

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail: bwsail@yahoo.com.

Email—
Use The Bcc Field To Protect Others' Privacy

You have, no doubt, seen numerous email messages sent out to the masses and ultimately land with a kerplunk in your inbox—you know, the messages with more text in the Cc field than in the actual message. You may or may not recognize some of the other recipients' addresses, but what you do recognize is your name in an email address that's sitting in the middle of the field, and now everyone else will recognize it, too.

Sending group emails using the Cc field is fine if you're talking about a manageable group in a work or family setting. Unfortunately, a few people (and you know at least one of them) like to dump their entire address book into the To or Cc field and send out copies of whatever pass-along message is going around the Internet that

(Continued from page 3)
week.

 Setting aside the minor annoyance of the dubious message itself, broadcasting a slew of email addresses in such a willy-nilly manner isn't the smartest thing to do in a world prowled by spammers. Although it's not terribly likely, a malicious hacker could intercept the message at some point during its transit and skim off the trove of email addresses in the huge To or Cc list. A more likely scenario, however, is that one of the many recipients will forward the message—keeping the entire list of addresses intact—to someone else, who forwards it on, and on, and on. Eventually, all of these addresses propagate to unknown quarters where they're ripe for the pickin'.

The Down Low
 The Bcc field in Yahoo! Mail is pretty easy to find, so we're not sure why people don't use it more often.

 There is an alternative for these situations, and it's too bad more people don't realize it's available: Bcc (blind carbon copy). Bcc is the field you'd use to copy a message sent to a particular recipient or recipients without notifying everyone else as to who is receiving the message. Bcc might sound sneaky in some ways, but there are actually a variety of reasons why you might want to use it.

 For instance, a business might want to send a message to a group of clients without giving every client the list of all its customers. Depending on the email application being used, a huge To or Cc list also might force recipients to scroll down before they can actually see your message; using Bcc avoids this problem, too.

 In addition, there are other reasons for using Bcc that are unrelated to the recipients themselves. For example, perhaps you need to Bcc all of your outgoing messages to another email account for easy access on another computer, or maybe you just want to back up the messages for safekeeping elsewhere.

 Substituting Bcc for Cc also can reduce the number of unintentional (but seemingly inevitable) reply-to-all mishaps that occur when a response meant for a single reader makes the rounds across dozens of desks. Send out an email message to any large group of people, and someone is bound to click the Reply To All button. Depending on the content of the original message, this reply might contain sentiments that aren't suitable for the entire office, club, school, or family. You can prevent this type of modern-day mishap from ever occurring if you limit which email addresses could become victims of a recipient's uncontrollable urge to click Reply To All.

 One of the most important reasons to use Bcc these days, however, is privacy. Even if a recipient is one of thousands whom you included on your Bcc list, he will never see a single one of those other email addresses—and neither will some unknown, downstream spammer that sees the message later on.

 Almost every Web-based email client or standalone program includes the capability for Bcc, but you might have to spend a bit of time looking around for it. For instance, in Gmail, you'd need to click the small Add Bcc link directly below the To field of a new message window. The same type of addition is necessary in Yahoo! Mail, too. If you use Microsoft Outlook, you'll need to open the new message, click the View menu, and select the Bcc Field option instead.

 Spread The Word

 Email makes communication a lot simpler than in the days when you really did need to load up a sheet of carbon paper if you wanted to send a letter to more than one recipient. Now it's almost too easy for well-meaning message senders to scatter hundreds of email addresses across the Internet. So, the next time you get a large forward with a bunch of addresses in the To or Cc fields, gently tell your friend about the wonders of using the Bcc option instead.

by Alan Phelps
Smart Computing Magazine

Why I'm a Member of the NOPCC

I've been a member of the NOPC Club for more than 8 years. During this time I've learned more about handling problems with my computer from other members and those serving on the Board of Directors than from any other source. I have also observed the patience and expertise with which each question is always answered. We have a different system at the office for which we receive training, but it isn't in any way similar to the many puzzles that a personal pc can produce.
Tech Support can be costly and inefficient until you actually know the cause of a problem and pin-point it. With membership in the NOPC Club you could almost eliminate any need for anyone's Tech Support.
The same expert people have also saved me a lot of money by advising against the purchase of a certain software or hardware and by recommending the item that may be best suited for my needs.
I wish to thank everyone for their help and support over

the years. Personally I plan to belong to this wonderful group for as long as I live and I mean it from the heart.

Jeanne Okamoto
Public Relations Chair

Bluetooth Wireless Explained

By Sandy Berger

You probably heard a lot of talk lately about wireless networks and wireless Internet. As always in the computer world, some of these technologies are hard to decipher. Understanding wireless connectivity is complicated by the fact that there are two types of wireless connections and each is very different. WiFi signals can travel fairy long distances, whereas Bluetooth is used for short distances usually less than 30 feet.

The Bluetooth technology is embedded in computer chips that are built into devices like computers, PDAs, headphones, cell phones, printers, and cameras. A Bluetooth headset lets you talk on a Bluetooth-enabled cell phone while the phone is in your pocket or briefcase with no wires connecting the two devices. A Bluetooth camera can automatically send pictures to a Bluetooth printer even if the two are not connected by wires.

Unlike a WiFi connection that a user initiates, two Bluetooth devices can hook up to each other automatically. The user doesn't have to press a button or give a command. This has profound implications. Using Bluetooth, your laptop can be programmed to synchronize files with your desktop when you bring it into the room. Pictures from your camera can be automatically sent to your computer. Your cell phone could even notify your Bluetooth coffee maker to start making coffee when you walk in the front door. As a matter of fact, since Bluetooth devices can simultaneously connect with up to seven devices, your cell phone could also transfer your calls to your house phone and start your bath, although I've not yet heard of a Bluetooth bathtub.

More and more bluetooth devices are becoming available everyday and new applications are constantly being developed. Today many cell phones have Bluetooth capabilities, and some laptops have both WiFi and Bluetooth connectivity built-in. Most desktop computers do not have Bluetooth built in, but it can be easily added with an inexpensive USB Bluetooth adapter.

Technically, Bluetooth operates on a 2.4 GHz ISM band that is available globally, so it can be used everywhere. This technology does not require an open line of site like many current infrared devices, including television remote controls. Its radio waves can pass through objects, making connecting easier. Bluetooth also has built-in encryption. Bluetooth 1.0 standard has a maximum transfer speed of 1 megabit per second (Mbps), while Bluetooth 2.0 can manage up to 3 Mbps. Bluetooth 2.0 is backward compatible with 1.0 devices. Since Bluetooth requires only small amounts of power, it is extremely useful in mobile devices.

Bluetooth has several security modes. The manufacturer of the Bluetooth-enabled device determines which mode to include in their gadget. In most cases, the device owner can establish each of the Bluetooth gadgets they own as "trusted devices" that will hook up to each other automatically. Other devices have to get the owners permission to be able to connect to their devices. More technical explanations and research can be found at the official Bluetooth Web site and The Official Bluetooth Membership Site.

Just in case you are wondering, several Scandinavian companies were pivotal in creating the Bluetooth standard. It was named for a Danish king, Harald Bluetooth who united parts of Denmark and Norway in the 900s. You can expect to see Bluetooth uniting many devices in the future.

Legal Bytes:
Do Shield Laws Extend to Bloggers?

By John Brewer,
member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
johnb@)jnbrewer.com
http://www.ccokc.org

The first amendment to the US Constitution contains a number of important personal rights. It reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Analysis of the amendment confirms why the courts have been given the task of interpreting the language through the years.

One of the important parts of the amendment is freedom of the press. In order to protect the press, approximately 31 States have enacted "shield laws." Journalists are protected by a qualified (limited) First Amendment right protect their confidential sources. Many of the federal circuits have held that a qualified privilege exists. However, journalists are frequently challenged to reveal their confidential sources. This privilege has received attention recently in the New York Times Co. v. Gonzales case that involves the phone records of Judith Miller. An interesting variation to this issue is whether Internet journalists have the same protection as print journalists. A recent case in California has examined this issue. The

case involved some Internet web site and Apple Computer.

Apple brought an action in California alleging that persons unknown caused the wrongful publication of secret plans on the World Wide Web to release a device that would facilitate the creation of digital live sound recordings on Apple computers. In an effort to identify the source of the disclosures, Apple sought and obtained authority to issue civil subpoenas to the publishers of the Web sites where the information appeared and to the email service provider for one of the publishers. The publishers moved for a protective order to prevent any such discovery. The trial court denied the motion on the ground that the publishers had involved themselves in the unlawful misappropriation of a trade secret. A California Court of Appeals held that his was error because (1) the subpoena to the email service provider could be enforced consistent with the plain terms of the federal Stored Communications Act (18 U.S.C. §§ 2701-2712); (2) any subpoenas seeking unpublished information from petitioners would be unenforceable through contempt proceedings in light of the California reporter's shield [note: California has a shield provision in the State Constitution] and (3) discovery of petitioners' sources is also barred on this record by the conditional constitutional privilege against compulsory disclosure of confidential sources. The Court of Appeals issued a protective order.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation is directly involved in the litigation. The following is extracted from the EFF web site. "The whole mess began in December 2004, when Apple filed suit against 20 unnamed and presumably unknown individuals, referred to in the court filing as "Does," for leaking confidential materials on an Apple product under development to several Web publications. As part of its investigation, Apple subpoenaed Nfox -- for communications and unpublished materials obtained by PowerPage publisher Jason O'Grady. A Santa Clara trial court upheld the subpoena in March of 2005 and the EFF appealed.

"In a 69-page ruling, the 6th District Court of Appeal ruled that bloggers and webmasters are no different in their protections than a reporter and editor for a newspaper. "We can think of no workable test or principle that would distinguish 'legitimate' from 'illegitimate' news," the judges wrote.

"Any attempt by courts to draw such a distinction would imperil a fundamental purpose of the First Amendment, which is to identify the best, most important, and most valuable ideas not by any sociological or economic for-

mula, rule of law, or process of government, but through the rough and tumble competition of the marketplace," they wrote.

"Today's decision is a victory for the rights of journalists, whether online or offline, and for the public at large," said EFF Staff Attorney Kurt Opsahl in a statement. Opsahl argued the case before the appeals court last month. "The court has upheld the strong protections for the free flow of information to the press, and from the press to the public."

"Apple argued its right to trade secrets trumped Constitutional rights, and it had exhausted other sources to determine the source of the information, even though Apple had not deposed employees who were in a position to know, Kevin Bankston, a staff attorney for the EFF told internetnews.com. The lower court decision agreed, and said Apple's trade secrets rights would trump any journalist's rights to source confidentiality.

"Bankston said the ruling is a win for anyone who uses email. "A lot of people will hear about this decision and think it doesn't affect them since they are not journalists, but it has a broader impact because of the number of email providers, particularly the number based in this district," he said.

"The court read Federal privacy law to forbid civil litigants like Apple from subpoenaing an individual's e-mail from e-mail providers. Instead, the court said civil litigants must subpoena you directly, and if you are a journalist, you can assert your rights of confidential sources.

"So they have to subpoena you rather than doing an end run around your rights and going straight to your e-mail provider," said Bankston.

If Apple chooses to appeal, the case goes to the state Supreme Court. Thus far, the sources for the original story have not been revealed, "and hopefully based on this decision they never will," said Bankston.

This is an interesting issue. The California case is far from over and this issue will continue to be litigated across the country.

John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor's and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to johnb(at)jnbrewer.com.

CLUB SUPPORTERS

August 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 **NOPC Gen Mtg** J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p	3	4	5 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
6	7 **Computer Programming** Location Varies call Mike 738-5997	8	9 **NOPC BOD** @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	10	11	12 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
13	14 **Computer Programming** Location Varies call Mike 738-5997	15 **Genealogy SIG** 7:00 pm Call 887.5746 for meeting location	16	17 **New User SIG** @McCann's 7:00p-9:00p	18	19 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
20	21 **Computer Programming** Location Varies call Mike 738-5997	22	23	24	25	26 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST690AM 10a-11a
27	28 **Computer Programming** Location Varies call Mike 738-5997	29	30	31		

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) is a private non-profit organization chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of PCs, peripheral equipment and software. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the NOPCC , its members or its officers. The club does not verify for accuracy the articles in this newsletter and leaves verification of accuracy to its readers. Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated as long as credit is given to the author (s) and the NOPCC. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, $40/yr.; Family Membership, $60/yr.;

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	president@nopc.org	246-7759
Vice President	Ray Paternostro .	vp@nopc.org	737-9099
Secretary	Tom Ford	secretary@nopc.org	985-643-3172
Treasurer	Don Herrmann	treasurer@nopc.org	831-1284
Director At Large	Carl Henderson	director1@nopc.org	466-3954
Director At Large	Mary Prinz	director2@nopc.org	455-1412
Director At Large	Mike York	director3@nopc.org	738-5997

Standing Committees

BBS SysOp	Lanny Goldfinch	sysop@nopc.org	482-5066
Newsletter Editor	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	897-1205
Public Relations	Jeannie Okamoto	pr@nopc.org	455-0977
Publicity	Tom Ford	publicity@nopc.org	985-643-3172
Webmaster	Sherrie Henne	webmaster@nopc.org	504-913-5638

Special Interest Groups

Computer Programming	Elliot Mike York	mike@gnonug.org	738-5997
Digital Media	Ray Paternostro	dm@nopc.org	737-9099
Genealogy	Vincent Haupt	hauptv@aol.com	985-785-6288
Internet	Ray Paternostro	internet-m@nopc.org	737-9099
New Users	Tom Ford	new-user@nopc.org	985-643-3172
Web Lab	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	897-1205

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	*www.nopc.org*