



Looking Through Windows – Vista

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The buzz is on about Microsoft's latest attempt to 'wow' users with yet another incarnation of Windows. It seems, however, that the gurus at Microsoft have used the word 'wow' synonymously with the word 'confusing.' In trying to provide features that suit a particular need, Microsoft has made it more difficult to figure out what to buy.

In this latest release the user has a choice between the following versions: Windows Vista Enterprise, Windows Vista Business, Windows Vista Ultimate, Windows Vista Home Premium, and Windows Home Basic. Confused yet? So is everyone else.

The easiest way to break it all down is that Windows Home Premium is probably the version most people will want on their computer. Home Premium is essentially Windows XP Professional with a few more bells and whistles, including added security.

Also included are home-user favorites such as Windows Media Center, Windows Movie Maker, now with high-definition support, and Windows DVD Maker. Windows Vista Business, Enterprise, and Ultimate versions include tons of nerd-satisfying features for business computer networks, mobile computing, and security settings that the average will probably not use.

Advantages to the new system are updated backup features and impressive graphics and video capacity. Sources also say that Vista is the most stable of the Windows operating systems so far, but that remains to be seen. Windows Vista upgrade packages cost anywhere from \$199 to \$299, depending on the version, with the full installation packages maxing out at about \$399. But is all of this even necessary?

Some computers will have to undergo hardware changes for Vista to work properly and some won't be able to run the new system at all. Here are the recommended system requirements for Windows Home Basic:

- 1 GHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
- 512 MB of system memory
- 20 GB hard drive with at least 15 GB of available space
- Support for DirectX 9 graphics and 32 MB of graphics memory
- DVD-ROM drive (This is especially noteworthy.)
- Audio Output
- Internet access (fees may apply)

The requirements for Vista Ultimate, Business, and Home Premium are even more involved. Visit deercomputerconsulting.com for complete information.

Historically, it's not a good idea to upgrade to a new package as soon as it hits the shelves. Allow some shakedown time before buying so that the product is out there for several months and more of the inevitable bugs get worked out.

Finally, determine if the need to update is real or just a desire to keep up with the Joneses. The bottom line is, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' For more information and details on Windows Vista visit the Deer Computer Consulting, Ltd. website or call 937-902-4857.