

World gets to put Windows 7 software to the test

May 4 2009, by Glenn Chapman



This undated handout image courtesy of Microsoft, shows a screenshot of a desktop background for Microsoft Windows 7. A nearly-final version of Windows 7 makes its world debut on Tuesday, giving people a chance to tell Microsoft what they like or hate about the new-generation operating system.

A nearly-final version of Windows 7 is making its world debut, giving people a chance to tell Microsoft what they love or hate about the new-generation operating system.

The release will be available at microsoft.com/downloads in a move intended to signal that the software giant is putting finishing touches on an operating system that it hopes will escape criticism heaped on its predecessor Vista.

"It appears that they are on target," said analyst Michael Cherry of private firm Directions on Microsoft, which specializes in tracking the US software giant.

"I think we need to be cautious though. [Windows 7](#) is still in development. While Microsoft is certainly moving on to the next logical milestone, this is still a test version of the operating system."

Copies of the Windows 7 Release Candidate (RC) software were made available to developers last week and early reviews have praised the operating system for its stability and for avoiding problems that marred Vista's image.

"Listening to our partners and customers has been fundamental to the development of Windows 7," Microsoft senior vice president for Windows business Bill Veghte said in announcing the RC release.

"We heard them and worked hard to deliver the highest quality release candidate in the history of Windows."

Complaints about Vista included that it was not compatible with some software designed for the previous-generation Windows XP operating system and that it was too much for netbooks or older computers to handle.

Cherry is testing Windows 7 on netbooks, increasingly popular low-cost mobile computers designed essentially for accessing the Internet and running a few simple programs.

"That is one of the places where Vista didn't do a good job," Cherry said. "I think Microsoft has been very cautious with Windows 7."

The RC release indicates that little is likely to be changed in the final

version of Windows 7 and that companies can begin tailoring software or hardware to the operating system, according to Microsoft.

Touted features include compatibility with touch-screen computer controls, faster video handling and being friendly to even light-weight hardware such as netbooks.

"Windows 7 is everything that Vista should have been," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group in Silicon Valley.

"It's less annoying and it's a fraction of the size. The only thing working against them is the economy; people without money aren't going to buy no matter how good the product."

Enthusiastic early reviews of Windows 7 are stoking speculation that Microsoft will release a final version of the new operating system in time for the year-end holiday shopping season.

"It makes sense that Microsoft should have it pre-Christmas," Cherry said of Windows 7.

"I think you need to keep in mind that if something comes up in testing they are going to take the delay and get it right. Microsoft doesn't need a problem on their hands."

Microsoft and some analysts have advised people to prepare for the Windows 7 release by upgrading to Vista instead of trying to leapfrog the maligned version of the operating system.

Cherry ignores such advice, saying he sees each new operating system as a chance to clean out his computer and start fresh.

He will back up his data, install Windows 7 on his computer and then

transfer files a bit at a time, getting rid of files he hasn't opened for a while.

"I use it as a complete housekeeping move," Cherry said of installing a new [operating system](#). "I will always do a fresh install; this way I know I am not bringing any baggage with me."

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