

Windows 7 Virtual XP Mode

28 April 2009, by John Messina



(PhysOrg.com) -- Microsoft has decided to give Windows 7 users a tool that will allow them to run Windows XP applications in a virtual machine. The tool is free with Windows 7 but will only be available to users of Windows 7 Professional, Ultimate and Enterprise Editions.

Microsoft made it clear about XPM's purpose. "Windows XP Mode is specifically designed to help small businesses move to Windows 7," Scott Woodgate, the director of Windows enterprise and virtualization strategy, said in a blog entry last Friday.

Michael Cherry, an analyst with Directions on [Microsoft](#) stated; "I think that this will help the uptake for Windows 7, because it removes one more 'gotcha, and that's never a bad thing to do." Microsoft sees XPM mode more as a safety net for users concerned about abandoning XP who don't have access to the centrally-managed MED-V (Microsoft Enterprise Desktop Virtualization).

Microsoft sees this has a smart and necessary move after the welcome users gave to Windows Vista. Microsoft feels that this will give business additional time to gear up to Windows 7 while still being able to run their old applications in XPM mode.

Michael Silver, an analyst with Gartner Inc., sees some big draw backs to this temporary compatibility fix. "You'll have to support two versions of Windows," he said. "Each needs to be secured, anti virus , firewalled and patched. Businesses don't want to support two instances of Windows on each machine. If a company has 10,000 PCs, that's 20,000 instances of Windows."

Another big problem Silver foresees with XPM is that business may neglect the real problem of trying to make sure their applications are compatible with Windows 7. Silver went on to say: "This is a great Band-Aid, but companies need to heal their applications. They'll be doing themselves a disservice if, because of XPM, they're not making sure that all their applications support Windows 7."

Microsoft is extending the lifespan of Windows XP by offering it as a Windows 7 add-on, however there is no budget for support. Microsoft discontinued support for Windows XP two weeks ago and is only offering "extended" support through mid-April 2014.

XPM will give some companies a false sense of security. What will happen in mid-April 2014 when XP isn't supported anymore? Companies would be better off if they make all their applications run on Windows 7.

Microsoft will be shipping a beta of XPM soon, but has not given a specific date to its availability. [Windows 7](#) Release Candidate (RC) will be available to users of its MSDN and TechNet services on Thursday, and to the public on May 5.

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