

Seminar paper for english about

# **Windows Vista**

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## Introducing Windows Vista

Windows Vista is a new operating system (further only OS) from Microsoft Corporation, which is last in a line of successful Windows OS starting with nearly ancient Windows 3.11, continuing across Windows 95, Win 98, Win NT, Win 2000, Win XP and some special server or multimedia versions and ending here, with new glossy Vista.

Let's take a look on some basic historical informations. I do not want to annoy the reader with tons of useless numbers and dates about it, but we've got to realize several facts. The first reference to the new OS was released by Microsoft in year 2004, in that time the new project bear codename "Longhorn". First beta-version was released on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2005, second in May of the year 2006 and in September 2006 Microsoft released first release candidate (RC1). Final product was released on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006, but in the Czech Republic Windows Vista wasn't available before January 2007 (corporations were allowed to buy it sooner, but normal customers not until Jan. 2007).

There is one interestingness from the developing of this OS. First plans and projects were quite brave, but not every planned improvement was finally realized. For example developers planned to build Windows Vista on completely new file system (something like a pattern of writing data to hard disk). But they were unfortunately under a pressure of time, so they decided to let here older file system known form older versions of Windows called NTFS and implement new file system into Windows after Vista. The new version of Windows is under development and there are first beta versions available for download on the Internet, its codename is Windows 7 after designation

of its core (Windows Vista has 6<sup>th</sup> version of the Windows core, I'm talking about it in section 3).

Windows Vista is offered in six versions. These are Starter, Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, Enterprise and Ultimate. I sorted them ascendantly according to their facilities from the less equipped Starter to most equipped Ultimate version.

As the last thing of introduction I would like to say, that I'm using Windows Vista Business for almost three months, so I feel at least as competent to write several lines about it.

## User interface

Windows Vista contains a new type of user interface called "Aero", which we can see on every picture advertisement. It is graphically completely different from classical windows user interface and it offers the user nicer icons, half-transparent windows, 3D graphical effects and so on.

On the other hand, Aero has quite high hardware requirements. To be sure that your computer will handle it, you must have a PC with 1 GB of memory, 1 GHz CPU and modern graphic card which is capable to perform 3D effects at least, but in this minimal configuration, you shouldn't expect any speed records from your computer.

To be frank I have to say, that I was impressed when I worked with Aero for the first time. New features (for example advanced switching between windows with key shortcut Win-Tab) or preview of windows on the Windows bar, but after some time, I returned to grey and not glossy, not transparent and not so spectacular, but fast and reliable old interface known from Windows 2000, which I used to use before Windows Vista.

Some time later I left Aero and switched to the old-styled view, I saw a video comparing Windows Vista Aero and Linux Ubuntu with a new 3D accelerated user interface for Linux, which impressed me more. 3D user interface for Linux is in my opinion far more advanced in this point of view, the user feels as if he can touch those rotating cubes and flowing windows through his monitor. I must also say, that I heard about instability of these graphic improvements in Linux, but what I have seen on those video is incredible. The link to those video is in section "Bibliography".

Nonetheless, we have to admit, that a person, who is using his computer for work, needs stable,

quick and well-organized environment, good looking "skin" is secondary. Lets look at me as on example of the average user. When I'm in school, I use to write notes to PC in some subjects. I don't want to bother with recharge, so I want my laptop to run as long as possible on battery. If I would turn Aero effects on, lifetime of battery would be shortened, because those effects needs graphical card. When I want to play a game or use some picture editor which demands a lots of memory and CPU performance or when I want to program in PHP which requires Apache and MySQL running on background, the only thing I need is the rough performance. When I'm doing something on computer, I'm just concentrating on that activity, not on awesome transparent window margins.

## „Under the bonnet“ features

Windows Vista is running on the new version of Microsoft Windows core. Its designation is 6 and that is logical if we realize, that previous system from workshop of Microsoft (XP) had core with designation 5. Of course there are subversions whose designations can be modified after decimal point, for example precise designation of OS on my computer is 6.0.6001.18145.

I would like to mention now two new functions of Windows Vista, which normal user don't use to know.

The first one is...

### **SuperFetch technology**

SuperFetch technology was designed to improve performance of frequently used applications.

I will use example to clarify it.

You have tens or even hundreds of programs in your computer, some of them are complaining additional functions of OS, some of them are yours. Normal user use to use statistically about thirty programs, but only about five or ten of them you need to run every time you are sitting behind computer, for example Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Office or ICQ. When you push the power button on the front side of your computer, you have to wait until the OS is fully loaded and then you run these programs according to your will. Technology called SuperFetch is running on the background of your OS and noticing every program you run during time when computer is running. When he

notices, that you run every time after start or during usage of the OS some program, he remembers it and when you start your computer next time, he pre-loads those program from hard disk to operational memory. The effect of his effort is that when you click then for example on icon of Microsoft Word, it starts within small fragment of time it used to start before.

This function is debatable. Although quick load of frequently used applications is quite pleasant, the hardware requirements are increasing because of this function. This function has two main disadvantages.

The first is, that after start of the OS looks your computer busy either if the OS is completely loaded. It is because of loading the frequently used applications on background. I was quite confused when I was beginning with Windows Vista, because the LED indicator of HDD on my computer always showed that HDD is busy either when I didn't do anything with computer. Also the amount of free RAM is decreasing.

Second and probably worst disadvantage is, that normal user can't switch this function of through some control panel or something like that. I had to study on the Internet some tutorials first before I found out how to switch it of. It can be done only by direct interference to Windows services and that is an area, which should be forbidden for normal users (unwise change of some hidden settings can cause instability or even collapse of OS).

### **Instant Search**

Instant Search is enhanced searching subroutine improved in order to fasten searching procedure as much as possible. Definition below which I found on Internet is in my opinion completely precise.

*„Instant Search silently indexes every file on the computer using file metadata, file content, and file creation date, thereby creating an inventory for the entire hard drive.“*

That means, that Instant Search subroutine is continuously going through hard drive and “indexing” files. Then if you type something into search field and submit it, you can expect very quick and accurate answer. Its because Instant Search doesn't search through whole computer, he only looks into some kind of his own database and returns what he have there.

It is not only searching for file names. Instant Search also includes programs into his results. For example when you want to run calculator and you don't want to search for it in sub folders

and sub sub folders of start menu, you only have to type "calc" into search box and the result is adequate and immediate.

Although it looks very smart at first, it have tough disadvantage on the second look. Because the Instant Search depends on it's "internal database", it have to go through every folder on the computer and try to read informations from every file in order to extract some meta data during the time of using the computer. It slows the system down and same as already mentioned SuperFetch technology, it causes persistent business of hard disk.

Fortunately you can specify concrete folders, which shall be indexed or turn this feature completely off.

## Conclusion

When I bought myself new laptop, I got preinstalled Windows Vista on its hard disk, but also installation CDs with Windows XP so I had free choice and I must say that I was thinking about it and considering for pretty long time.

Firstly I was delighted about the glossiness of user interface. Then I was disappointed by those controversial features which I described above.

Then I read through several tutorials from the Internet, I made necessary changes of settings and I am quite satisfied about it till now. I realized that although there are arguments which speaks against Windows Vista and for Windows XP, I have no need to switch to OS which is five years older. Furthermore I am looking forward to Service Pack 2 which is under development right now but will be released in close future.

Those one, who use to visit sometimes some public discussion on the Internet probably noticed, that there is quite strong resistance towards Windows Vista. There are a lots of people who are even cursing this OS. I'm finding those effort pointless. Many "proofs" against Windows Vista are exaggerated and after observance of this anti-vista phenomenon I found out, that most people who are talking so sharply against Windows Vista are just trying to look professional even when they are not.

Windows Vista fulfills every requirements I have. It is stable, reliable and modern system

supporting all the software and hardware I need. It has comfortable functions and I think that I will not change it for another.

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