

# Texas State University and Microsoft Windows Vista

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## *Technology Resources*

After five years of development and some high-profile delays, Microsoft launched their latest operating system, Windows Vista, to businesses and universities in December 2006. On Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Microsoft released Windows Vista for purchase to the general public.

There are some considerations to account for before you adopt and deploy this operating system into your department. While there are many advantages to Windows Vista, the intent of this document is to make you aware of the potential issues affecting the Texas State community.

The Hardware requirements for Windows Vista are considerably greater than for previous versions of Windows. Moreover, the advertised requirements for the operating system produce less than satisfactory performance.

### ***What's New?***

According to Microsoft, Windows Vista contains hundreds of new features; some of the most significant include enhanced security, an updated graphical user interface and visual style dubbed Windows Aero, improved searching features, new multimedia creation tools such as Windows DVD Maker, and completely redesigned networking, audio, print, and display sub-systems. Vista also aims to increase the level of communication between machines on a home network using peer-to-peer technology, making it easier to share files and digital media between computers and devices.

Improved security was the primary design goal for Vista. Microsoft's Trustworthy Computing initiative, which aims to improve public trust in its products, has had a direct effect on its development. This effort has resulted in a number of new security and safety features such as the advanced User Account Control, BitLocker Drive Encryption, Windows Defender, Internet Explorer 7 and a newly designed and upgraded Windows Firewall.

### ***Hardware Requirements***

Technology Resources has vigorously tested Microsoft Windows Vista Enterprise edition against all of the current hardware configurations distributed by Technology Resources. Windows Vista was successfully installed and passed performance testing on the OptiPlex GX 620 (desktop) and later models, as well as the Dell Latitude 620 (notebook) and later models.

### ***Vista Readiness and Texas State University***

In early 2007, Technology Resources organized a Vista Test Team to assist with testing the new operating system. This is a voluntary group of individuals across campus that collaborated to identify potential compatibility issues with software used in the university computing environment. Since this time, many of the applications previously found to be incompatible have been upgraded and are now compatible with Windows Vista. For compatibility details on specific software applications, please visit the software manufacturer's official website.

### ***Recommendations for Support***

Currently, Technology Resources does not plan to fully adopt or deploy Windows Vista to Texas State University faculty or staff computers. It is recommended that faculty and staff continue to use the Windows XP operating system. However, Windows Vista is available for users who would like to install this operating system. Please see the "Product Information" details below on how to obtain this operating system.

When deciding whether or not to upgrade, please consider the hardware requirements mentioned earlier in this support document, as deviations from these recommendations may cause serious performance issues.

### ***Product Information***

- **Faculty and Staff - Departmental use** (PC and Intel Mac)
  - Microsoft Windows Vista – Enterprise Edition (upgrade only)
  - Contact [ITAC-Software-Team@txstate.edu](mailto:ITAC-Software-Team@txstate.edu) for Vista installation.
- **Faculty and Staff - Personal use** (PC and Intel Mac)
  - Contact the University Bookstore (512-245-2273).
- **Students** (PC and Intel Mac)
  - Contact the University Bookstore (512-245-2273).

### ***Licensing Information***

Even though licensed by the University, each individual copy of Windows Vista must contact a central control server and be authenticated on-campus at Texas State University – San Marcos. After the first authentication, Vista will re-authenticate on a regular basis. If it cannot authenticate within a reasonable amount of time, the operating system will go into a reduced functionality mode. Reduced functionality mode will not allow use of programs, but will allow partial use of Internet Explorer and shut down after an hour's use. This is to give time to find a license server or connect to the internet.

### ***Texas State University - Windows Vista Support Timeline***

- Full support for the Microsoft Windows Vista operating system is available from Technology Resources via the IT Assistance Center (ITAC) to Faculty, Staff, and Students as of January, 2008.