



Should I buy Windows 7?

Introduction

Windows 7 is Microsoft's latest operating system. It was released in October 2009 and replaced Microsoft Vista. Vista was launched 3 years ago but never became popular, despite being installed on most new computers purchased since then. Owners of older computers generally preferred to stay with Windows XP rather than upgrade to Vista. This was because the launch version of Vista was defective in many ways and caused major problems until Service Pack 1 was released to improve matters. Service Pack 2 has also been released with further improvements.

Windows 7 compared with Vista

Windows 7 overcomes most of the shortcomings of Vista. It certainly starts up and runs faster than Vista and has been designed to be easier to use than all previous versions of Windows. It has fewer pop-up windows than Vista – those asking for permission to proceed. They were intended to make Vista more secure but became an irritation because they appeared so often. Users of Windows 7 need to authorise actions far less frequently, but there is no lessening of security.

Windows 7 looks very similar to Vista. Vista users should therefore have less difficulty getting used to it compared with those who move from XP.

For anyone with a touch-screen monitor, Windows 7 allows programs to be operated using finger-tip control directly on the screen. Instead of moving the mouse pointer and clicking, the appropriate box is tapped with finger or finger-nail. Cleverly, this works even with older programs such as Word 2003 which was not written with touch-screens in mind.

Unlike Vista and all previous versions of Windows, Windows 7 sold in the EU does not include Internet Explorer. This is because of an EU anti-competition ruling last year when Microsoft was fined £765 million. Rival internet browser (*for the definition of a 'browser' see our previous newsletter*) programs such as Mozilla and Opera were adversely affected because Microsoft bundled their own Internet Explorer product with Windows.

What do I need to consider if I want Windows 7?

Microsoft Internet Explorer (version 8) is still available free of charge but it has to be downloaded from the Microsoft website after Windows 7 has been installed. Alternatively, other internet browsers such as Mozilla Firefox or Opera Browser are also available for free download. Enter these names in Google and see what they have to offer.

There are several versions of Windows 7, just as there were with XP and Vista. Windows 7 'Home Premium' should suit most of us. The 'Professional' and 'Ultimate' versions are available for businesses and those who require more advanced features. One such feature is the ability to run older software programs (which would not run under Windows 7) in Windows XP Mode. If a particular program is important to you and you are not sure if it will work with Windows 7, visit the 'Windows 7 Compatibility Center' on the Microsoft website and enter the name of your program to check.

Approximate Microsoft retail prices to upgrade from Windows XP or Vista to Windows 7 are:

Windows 7 Home Premium - £99.99.

Windows 7 Professional - £199.99.

Before deciding to buy, it is important to download and run the 'Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor' on your computer. This free program is provided on the Microsoft website to help find any potential compatibility issues with your computer's hardware, devices or programs which might affect installing Windows 7.

If you decide to go ahead, it is important to back up all your files, including photos. Depending upon how much storage space you need, you can back up files to a flash drive, CD, DVD or external hard disk.

During installation, make sure that your Internet connection is working so that you can get the latest installation updates. These include security updates and hardware driver updates which can help with installation.

Is Windows 7 for me?

If you have Windows XP and are happy with it, you may feel that there is little reason to upgrade to Windows 7. In which case, make sure that you have updated XP with Service Pack 3 and subsequent updates. Also download any updates for Microsoft Office programs such as Word.

If you have Windows Vista, Windows 7 will not be very different, although it will probably run more quickly. If you are otherwise happy with Vista, make sure that you have updated with Service Pack 2 and subsequent updates. Also download any updates for Microsoft Office programs such as Word.

Help?

If you need help with any of this, or more information, please contact Brundish Training Centre on 01728-627174 or email us at enquiries@brundishtrainingcentre.co.uk.

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