

NTRLS IT: Real Stories
Some things to consider before moving Windows Vista

Issue / Problem:

Whether buying new computers or upgrading existing ones, some things should be considered before moving to Windows Vista.

Background Information you should know about:

What is Windows Vista? Windows Vista is Microsoft's next operating system (O/S) after Windows XP/XP Pro and it was released about a year and half ago. Vista is compatible with Windows 2000 and Windows 2003 Server editions. It is highly recommended that you get Vista Business or better since it will have the networking components in place that you will need to add the workstations to your domain. There are 8 flavors of Windows Vista which include the following: Basic 32bit, Basic 64bit, Home Premium 32bit, Home Premium 64bit, Business 32bit, Business 64bit, Ultimate 32bit and Ultimate 64bit. You will usually use the 32bit O/S unless you have software that only runs on a 64bit O/S.

Resolution / How we solved the problem:

If you're going to move to Vista in your library, then please consider the following information before doing so.

1. When a new operating system comes out from Microsoft, it is best practice to wait about 6 months to a year, until the first service pack comes out, before upgrading to it. What is a service pack? It's a software package released for addressing all the main security and bug issues that users detect and report back to Microsoft to be fixed in the O/S. Microsoft will then collect that data and create a service pack for users to install that usually addresses most of the reported major bugs and security holes in the O/S. Unless you want to deal with those issues, and most people I know do not like to pay companies to beta test, you should wait until the first service pack is released before moving to the new O/S. Vista has been out long enough for the first service pack to be released.
2. If you are going to upgrade your existing computers to Windows Vista, then make sure that the computer's hardware -- CPU, RAM, HDD space, Video Card, Sound Card and network cards -- are compatible with Vista. You can usually find out this information from your computer manufacturer if you can't obtain it yourself.
3. You need to make sure that your automation software is also compatible with Vista. You wouldn't want to install the new computers or upgrade your existing ones if, for example, your Athena or Follett won't function anymore. You couldn't function as a library if this happened.

4. If you are buying new computers, make sure your Bar Code Scanners will function on them. Most of the newer computers are losing the PS/2 connections and are going to be all USB. PS/2 is the older type connection for your mouse and keyboard and most of the older Bar Code scanners are hooked up to your keyboard on a PS/2 connection. So make sure you can replace the cable to the scanner or replace the scanner entirely to USB if this becomes an issue for you.
5. Make sure your printers are compatible with Vista. All most all of the newer printers you buy today will be compatible with Vista, but the older ones may not be. So make sure you check with the printer vendor to see if a driver has been written, or is already included in Vista's driver list if you need to use the older printers in your library when you move to Vista.
6. Make sure your antivirus protection software is also compatible with Vista. If you find out it's not, you will need to move to a newer version or replace it with one that is compatible with Vista.
7. Make sure any other software you use is also going to work with Vista. Again replace it or upgrade it if it's not going to be. Examples would be older programs like Print Shop Pro, older office suites, CD burning software, etc. If you're buying new computers, typically the new ones will come with newer CD burning software, and Vista also has limited built-in burning capability.
8. Make sure the security software for your public computers is also compatible with Vista. Examples would be like Deep Freeze or Fortress Grande. If the version you have doesn't make the list, it will need to be upgraded or replaced.

If you covered all of these steps, then you have avoided most of the obstacles in your path to moving to Vista. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at abeatty@ntrl.org.