# Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for Feb. 5, 2009

Carl Bulger, Presided

Presentation:

Rob Pegoraro, Washington Post Technology Specialist/Columnist spoke. In college, he majored in International Relations. His column, "Fast Forward", appears in the Post on Thursdays and his Help Q. & A. column appears on Sundays. He also writes a daily blog called "Faster Forward" for WashingtonPost.com. Every other week he writes a tip that is emailed to customers who have signed up for PostPoints.

Rob picked up a copy of Windows 7 Beta at the Consumer Electronics Show in January. He did a clean install on a Dell laptop. After a few days testing he wrote a review that appeared in the Thursday, Jan. 29th Washington Post. Because it is a "Beta", or test version, he doesn't recommend that "newbies" or those who don't know how to recover from a computer software malfunction try it, yet.

Because his average reader doesn't read the manual, he doesn't either. Besides, he thinks that an operating system or an application should be intuitive, especially for a knowledgeable "techie". The install took three hours and required three, mostly automatic, restarts.

Rob Pegoraro's impressions are that Windows 7 resembles Vista, but improving on it slightly. It significantly improves User Account Control (UAC) which drives Vista users crazy. Windows 7 will still warn you if a software application or a piece of malware threatens the stability or security of your computer, but it will not get in the way of things that **you** do, the way Vista does.

Memory requirements are significantly reduced. Where Vista required a minimum of 2 GB and Microsoft recommended 4 GB, Windows 7 was using only 1.18 GB of memory with several applications running. Rob could see this using the system monitor utility that gave a lot more detail than XP's or Vista's Task Manager.

Startup took a little longer than Vista and Shutdown seemed a little faster. Waking up from Sleep was also faster.

The System Notification Tray in the lower right hand corner now displays only icons of basic functions: Speakers, Safely Remove Hardware, etc. To access other important icons, you click on an Up Arrow at the end of the tray which causes icons of other loaded applications or utilities.

The Task Bar on the lower left contains unlabeled icons representing applications that are open. If you hover over an icon with the mouse, preview panes appear above. This is an improvement over earlier operating systems that required you to Alt-Tab through open applications.

The Search Box in the upper right corner remains and is a great help in finding applications and functions such as Settings.

Windows 7 is still a little too complex and a little dated, Pegoraro believes. This may be a manifestation of the conflict between geek culture and users who consider the computer and its operating system as tools, rather than playthings.

Pegararo had installed both Internet Explorer 8 and Firefox browsers. In Windows 7, Firefox opens tabs much faster.

After Microsoft receives user opinions and bug reports, it will change Windows 7 and reissue it in either a Beta2 or a Release Candidate 1 (RC1) version. RC1 may be followed by RC2 or by the final release, which may occur near the end of 2009 or the beginning of 2010.

Bob Blum asked about dual booting Windows 7 with either Vista or XP. Pegoraro says it is tricky and requires a lot of disk space. If you disregard his advice, he recommends a free SourceForge.net disk partition program called "GParted". Another possibility he mentioned in reply to a question from Bob Davis: Download Microsoft's free "Virtual PC 2007" which will allow you to run Windows 7 on a virtual PC inside of Vista or XP.

Pegoraro doesn't recommend 64-bit versions of operating systems

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unless you use programs over 4GB, which home users don't commonly do. Compatibility is also a problem; you'll need special drivers which, for many applications, haven't yet been written.

As it did with Vista, Microsoft intends to release Windows in at least six versions: Basic will be sold only in poor countries. In the U.S., Home Premium and Professional will be sold to the home user with the option of upgrading to Ultimate. Professional and Business versions will be for enterprise and commercial customers.