

Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for Jan. 21, 2010

Carl Bulger presided.

PRESENTATION: Windows 7

Steve Deming, Microsoft Technology Partners Advisor, demonstrated Microsoft's **Windows 7**. The room was packed. Although he considers himself a "hardware guy", Steve Deming is an excellent presenter of Microsoft's software. The same can be said for our own Bob Blum, who gave us an excellent introduction to Windows 7 last October 15, just a week before it was put on the market to the general public. The difference is that Deming officially represents Microsoft's public face – it's technical and marketing policies and objectives.

Deming described Windows 7 as "Vista 2.0". Because Vista was not well received, Microsoft paid attention to Vista user's complaints and solicited their suggestions for Windows 7. Microsoft's senior executives attend a final review of any product before it is released. They usually go over the suggestions that they have received from users and ask the developers if they have incorporated each suggestion and if not, why not? Steve suggested that this was a little late in the process to be asking these questions. If YOU have suggestions, he suggests that you go to <http://windows.support.com>.

Deming started with the five most often heard suggestions of Vista users who said they wanted Windows 7 to simply work; to work

faster; to make everyday tasks easier; to have new features; and, to be more intuitive. Windows 7 has accomplished these by being faster and more stable than Vista; and at least no more difficult than Vista to operate. Whether it is more intuitive depends partly on you.

Microsoft has been kidded about having the only operating system that requires you to hit the START button to begin to turn the computer OFF. They've replaced the word "Start" with what Steve calls the "Start PEARL" located in the same place, the lower left corner.

As in earlier operating systems, the bar containing the Task Area and System Tray can be moved from the bottom of the desktop to the side of the screen or to the top. Deming moved it to the top so that people in the back of the room could see it as he showed that Win7 has larger icons for applications. Icons for open applications are highlighted in a frame. When you mouse over the icon of an application, preview windows pop open.

In the START MENU you can see a long list of recently opened documents or files BEFORE opening the application. If you click on one, it will open the application to that specific document. If you frequently open the same document or file, you can PIN it to the top part of the list by clicking on the PIN icon beside the filename. That way it will never be automatically eliminated

from the list even if you haven't opened it for a long time.

Icons for background tasks and what in the DOS era were called "Terminate and Stay Resident (TSR) Tasks" still appear in the System Tray (Deming called it the "Notifier Area") on the right side of the bar. As in XP, some are hidden to save space. But when you click the arrow icon at the end of the displayed icons, the hidden icons appear in a small window ABOVE the System Tray and, unlike in XP, STAY there until you click it off.

In Windows 7, Microsoft has toned down the icon colors so much that many are black-and-white. Third party programs are appearing that colorize or intensify the colors of the icons.

Vista introduced Gadgets such as Clock, Weather, Stocks, etc. Unlike in Vista, Gadgets can be dragged to ANY location on the Win7 desktop.

The Action Center icon is a pennant that appears white when the computer is functionally normally. When there is a problem it turns red. The Action Center displays problems regarding Security, Maintenance, Troubleshooting, and Recovery.

In Windows 7 the ENTIRE Title Bar for a window can be used to CONTROL the window. The window can be MAXIMIZED by dragging the window via its title bar to the top of the desktop. If you move it to either the right or left border, it will be minimized

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to HALF screen. This function is called “Aero **Snap**”. If you grab the title bar and rapidly shake it horizontally, “Aero **Shake**” can make all other open windows disappear. “Aero **Peek**” allows you to see through open windows and gadgets to the desktop below by temporarily turning the open windows transparent.

Windows Explorer is the same as it was in Vista, but much different than it was in XP. For example, the list of Favorites can be made to expand, contract, or disappear by clicking on the arrow at the left of the Favorites title.

The search feature is much more consistent between Explorer and the Start menu. Its also more helpful, tangible, and useful.

At the bottom left of the screen is a Desktop Search box. When you press on the Windows key, the cursor moves to the Search Box. When you click on a file in the list of search results, the list DISAPPEARS. This is frustrating.

If you type the name of an application or “Control Panel”, or even a specific application in Control Panel, it will go directly to them. For example, type “fire” and it will go to the Firewall settings.

Searching can be sped up by letting the Indexing Service work in the background. If you are working on an application that is intro-

ducing new files, changing files, or deleting files rapidly, you may want to temporarily turn off indexing to speed up memory access, and CPU and hard drive operation. When you turn it back on, they will slow down dramatically as it re-looks at a lot of previously indexed files because it hasn't been able to watch what you were doing while it was off. It does not index removable media such as flash or USB drives.

Vista users complained about the extra effort required by the User Account Control (UAC), a feature Microsoft introduced to improve security. While UAC reduced malware by 50% when it was ON, its frequent warnings were annoyingly disrupting. In Windows 7 you have two intermediate choices between ON and OFF. If UAC is fully ON, it will always warn you. At the next setting down, it will gradually learn your preferences over a week or two. After that, warnings will be infrequent.

Microsoft's Live One Care \$30 anti-virus and anti-malware services have been incorporated in the free Microsoft Security Essentials. It must be downloaded from <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/>. Because antivirus applications interfere with one another, you should not download it if you are using another antivirus product. Security Essentials is probably as good as most other free antivirus applications but not as good as many paid applica-

tions. It is also available to Vista and XP users. Microsoft's Defender can be left on your computer because it is only an anti-spyware application. Antispyware applications don't interfere with one another.

Microsoft has other malware scanning tools. Microsoft's Malicious Software Removal Tool, which Microsoft updates every month, will remove hard-to-remove malware. It won't affect System Restore, so if you subsequently restore your system using System Restore, you may reintroduce the malware. Microsoft has free antivirus support. Call 1-866-PCSafety. Steve advises you, however, to get a second opinion.

Deming described “Libraries” as a business application that will search multiple computers on a network using their indexes (provided you are authorized to access them). Others have described a “Libraries” as a folder containing shortcuts to your favorite documents, photos, videos, or applications which are probably located in different folders. If you have a home network and have the Professional or Ultimate editions of Win7 installed on two or more computers, a LIBRARY would be able to access files on the other computers.

There are six different versions of Windows 7: Starter Edition appears on inexpensive netbooks. Home Basic is available only in

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emerging countries, not the U.S. **Home Premium** is what the average user will buy. It has a Digital Video Recorder (DVR) capability. The Professional edition is the standard business edition which is designed to securely network with other computers. It has file/folder encryption and virtualization capabilities. The Ultimate Edition adds the Bit Locker. The Professional, Enterprise, and Ultimate editions offer a virtual platform for a free Windows XP in Compatibility Mode. Because it is run on a virtual platform, it will probably be slower and more unstable than an independent installation of XP. Not all older computers have processors and motherboards capable of virtualization.

If you install Windows 7 Home Premium and later decide you want a feature that is only available in the Professional or Ultimate versions, all you need to do is contact Microsoft or a vendor to buy a keycode which will activate (unlock) the hidden features of the higher edition. They are already installed in the operating system and only need to be activated.

Dr. Norm Bohrer discussed the Pros and Cons of Upgrading to Windows 7 at our meeting on October 15. Go back and review that on our website's Meetings page: <http://BSCCclub.home.com-cast.net/meetings.htm>. Beside the October 15 meeting descrip-

tion, click on the link [091015](#) to the minutes for that meeting.

UPGRADING from Vista to Windows 7 can be done "in place", without removing anything, because Windows 7 is just an improved (MUCH improved) version of Vista. An upgrade from Windows XP, however, requires a "CLEAN, or CUSTOM INSTALL". Things you want to save must be backed up and then restored after you have wiped the hard disk clean and installed Windows 7. The Migration Tool will facilitate this process.

Other helpful tools will be: Windows Upgrade Advisor (free download) will list hardware and software that is or is not compatible with Windows 7.

Windows Easy Transfer Wizard (free download and also on Windows 7 disk) will assist in transferring files and settings.

According to Michael Muchmore in PCMag.com, a \$20 (discounted to \$14) utility, PCMover by Lap-Link, will greatly simplify transferring from WinXP to Win7 because in addition to transferring your data it will transfer your applications. For a review, see the following two articles:

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2353301,00.asp>

http://www.pcmag.com/print_article2/0,1217,a%253D244390,00.asp

After installation, the Action Center in Windows 7 will advise you what to do to keep it running. Look for the RED Warning Flag!

Live Essentials will tell you where to find all the utilities for mail, pictures, movies, security, etc.

For intensive computing applications such as gaming, video or photo editing, computer aided design (CAD), or if you typically work with many applications open simultaneously, you can choose the 64-bit version (supplied on a separate disk in the same box) provided your computer can handle it. You'll need to check this with the Windows Upgrade Advisor. One advantage of the 64-bit version is that it allows more than 4 GB of Random Access Memory (RAM). Even if you don't have more than 4GB of RAM installed, it is still advantageous provided your hardware is compatible. For 64-bit computing, minimum RAM is 2GB. While 32-bit applications will run on a 64-bit OS, they probably won't run faster. There are few 64-bit applications available now and old printers, scanners, copiers, and other hardware may never get the necessary 64-bit drivers. If you want to experiment with 64-bit Windows 7, you can install it temporarily and revert to the 32-bit version if you have been careful not to activate and register it. You'll have 30 days to try it.

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Deming briefly answered questions regarding Microsoft Office: 2007 Office Home and Student Ed. Purchased from a retailer is valid for up to three computers. The Standard Edition is good on only one computer.

Office 2010 won't become available until May or June 2010.

Go to <http://msdn.microsoft.com/> for tutorials.

Email Steve Deming at SDEM-ING@microsoft.com with your questions or comments. Please allow up to two weeks for a reply (longer if he happens to be on vacation at the time).

Deming did not mention and Microsoft doesn't advertise that it is possible to do a Custom Install of Windows 7 which will allow you continued access to your old XP operating system as you become accustomed to Windows 7. It's not a virtual copy of XP such as is offered in the XP Mode of the Professional and Ultimate versions. It requires a "DOUBLE BOOT" installation. After you're comfortable with Windows 7, you can eliminate XP and use Windows 7 exclusively. See the two part article: <http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/window-on-windows/?p=1728&tag=nl.e064> and <http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/window-on-windows/?p=1751&tag=nl.e064>.

For general instructions on installing Windows 7:

<http://www.techtalkz.com/windows-7/514412-windows-7-installation-guide-tutorial.html>

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/Installing-and-reinstalling-Windows-7>

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2354687,00.asp>

Ten Free Anti-Virus Programs for Windows 7:

http://i.techrepublic.com.com/downloads/adl_10_windows7_av.pdf

Articles on Windows 7:

5 articles in Smart Computing Magazine, Nov. 2009:

p.52 "Meet Windows 7" p.54
"What's New in Windows 7" p.58
"Windows 7 Add-Ons" p.62
"Windows 7: Should You Upgrade?" p.64 "Install Windows 7"

4 articles in PC World Magazine, November 2009:

p.60 "Windows 7: Special Issue"
p.63 "Windows 7: Not Flashy, Just Effective"
p.75 "Windows 7: Much Slimmer and Slightly Faster"
p.81 "Windows 7: The Smartest Way to Upgrade"