

Geeks to the Rescue

Spring 2009 Newsletter

News

Another New Windows!

Yep, you heard it right, after three years of people complaining about Windows Vista, Microsoft is about to launch a replacement named simply, Windows 7. It is expected that Windows 7 will be gone over with a fine-toothed comb before it is released to the public on October 22nd this year, in order to avoid a repeat of the criticism (and undoubtedly lost market share) that Microsoft endured over hardware and software compatibility issues with Windows Vista. From what I've seen so far, it looks like they've taken the best bits of Windows XP and Windows Vista and put them together into a more streamlined package.

Windows 7 won't include an email program, but you can download the Windows Live package to

What's new in Windows 7? Well, to start with, it actually appears to be pretty quick. Start ups and shut downs are fast and machines that are currently quite slow using Windows Vista will be quite quick using Windows 7! One of the big improvements is simple tools that allow you to easily navigate and organise all the windows that you have open at once. There's even a little button near the clock that you just hover your cursor over and it shows you the desktop plus an outline of all the windows you have open so you can see at a glance what you have open and where it is. Overall, while Vista felt like a sprawling mess, Windows 7 seems tight and unified.

An oddity - Windows Mail, Windows Movie Maker and Windows Live Photo Gallery have all been omitted from Windows 7. You can download the Windows Live Essentials Pack which has Mail, Photo Gallery and Movie Maker included, but why not just include it in Windows 7 in the first place?

Windows 7 will come in six editions (as did Vista). The only two that you should really look at are the "**Home Premium**" edition (for home and simple office networks) and the "**Professional**" edition (for more complex business networks that use domains). However, watch out, because there is a version called "**Starter**" edition that will be used on cheaper laptops and those tiny netbooks. This edition is missing quite a few standard features.

Now, if you're perfectly happy with how your computer is running and your current version of Windows, then there is absolutely no reason to run out and buy Windows 7. However, if you are in the market for a new computer, be aware that as soon as Windows 7 is released, new models of laptops (and brand-name desktops) will rapidly change over to it, so steer clear of "**Starter**" edition. **Don't worry, Geeks to the Rescue won't be selling any computers with this edition of Windows 7.**

Seasonal Focus

Blackouts and Lightning

Computers and modems, need a nice, smooth delivery of electricity - they don't like ups and downs in voltage. To that end, they usually have some circuitry in them that does it's best to iron out the little bumps. But, the big bumps can be killers!

What causes "bumpy" electricity?

It's usually associated with stormy weather: lightning strikes, blackouts and strong winds and car accidents that damage power poles and Telstra pillars (those grew cylinders about a metre high that you see sprouting out of footpaths).

- **Lightning bolts** can be up to 120 million Volts which totally overwhelms the 240 Volt electrical and 50 Volt phone systems at our homes and offices. And because it is such a massive voltage, it doesn't even have to be a direct strike to cause damage. Imagine how much damage is caused when lightning actually manages to make a direct hit on the power or phone lines in your vicinity!
- **Blackouts** (which can be caused by car accidents, high winds and lightning strikes) also cause damage, but it's not the loss of power that is the problem, but the surge of voltage when the power comes back on – especially if it has only been off for a very short period of time.

When to be concerned and what you can do

You need to be concerned about thunder storms, high winds, wet weather and blackouts and implement one of these two solutions:

1. **Unplug** your computer and modem's **power plugs** from the wall and unplug the modem's **phone line** from the wall (they need to be unplugged not just switched off), OR
2. Don't unplug, just install an Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) with surge protection.

Solution 1 cover all situations, but it can end up being a pretty monotonous task because there is a fair bit of wet and stormy weather at this time of the year. It can also be frustrating because you can't use your computer during that period. And what happens if you're not home and you have a blackout or there is wet weather?

Solution 2 covers all situations except direct lightning strikes (and lets face it, these are unlikely), but even then, it is usually only the UPS that gets damaged as it is sacrificed to save what is plugged into it. The big bonus here is that when the power goes off, a UPS allows your computer to continue running for another 10 – 20 minutes so you can safely save all your work and properly shut down your computer until the power comes back on.

Spring Special

Our seasonal special is a 750VA UPS with Phone and Power Surge Protection at the discounted price of **\$155**. (GST included in the price, but delivery and installation is not). We only have limited stock and once that runs out, the price will return to \$175.

Help Yourself

Avoiding viruses when web-surfing.

It's really common – you're just Googling something of interest and all of a sudden, a message pops up to tell you that your computer is infected. The message goes on to say that you need to download some specifically mentioned software to fix the infection AS SOON AS POSSIBLE or your computer will catch fire/electrocute you/wipe out all your files/empty your bank account/etc.

Now, the messages aren't usually as ridiculous as the one I've made up, in fact, they're usually very convincing and compelling. They are designed to be that way so that you will go ahead and download the software. Of course, once you do, you've over-ridden your security software's ability to protect you and your PC is now infected. Then all hell breaks loose.

So, what you need to be aware of is that the only time legitimate messages warning about infections will pop up is when your security software detects an infection – you will know it is from your security software because it will say the name of the security software at the top of the window that the message came up in. And, it won't ask you to download any other software.

The other issue is that sometimes people find it impossible to get rid of the message once it has popped up, so in desperation, they end up clicking on the message to get rid of it. Don't ever do this – if you really can't get rid of the message, just shut down your computer and restart it again. That might take a bit of time right now, but it's going to save you a lot more time in the long run!

Client Focus

Food for Me

www.foodforme.com.au

895 Albany Hwy, East Vic Park

Another of Geeks to the Rescue's long time client is **Food for Me**.

Food for Me provides you with a host of indulgences on your pathway to foodie nirvana. A luscious coffee, a wicked caramel slice, a salubrious salad or a gluten-free lunch can all be yours! And if you need to impress your clients, **Food for Me's** catering will have them raving about you. Just pop in to East Victoria Park and you'll be guaranteed a real "local's welcome".

Newsletter Deal

Mention this newsletter when booking an appointment with Geeks to the Rescue for the month of **September 2009** and we'll give you a **10% discount** off the first hour's consultation fee!



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