

LANsultants Times

Your Official Source for LANsultants News

Vol.10 No.2

215-546-3124

Spring 2008

Vista, Server 2008 & Exchange 2007 Status Report

IS YOUR NOTEBOOK BACKED UP?

Vista, the replacement operating system to Microsoft's Windows XP, has still failed to gain traction in the corporate environment due to now mostly resolved incompatibility issues with legacy hardware and software, a deficiency of must-have new features, plus the simple absence of a compelling reason to upgrade. We have found the best approach is to procure new PCs with Vista Business OEM and exercise the "downgrade" rights to Windows XP Professional SP2. This provides a useable operating system for the present time and eliminates the need to procure a license whenever and, if ever, Vista becomes the business standard in the future.

Microsoft Server 2008 shipped in February, and, unlike Vista, does offer new features of interest to business customers. Server 2008 is built on a 64-bit kernel, unlike 2003 Server Standard which was 32-bit. With new code, it may be some time until third-party software is 100% compatible, but once this hurdle is overcome Server 2008 will provide new security features and performance enhancements, improved virtual server (which allows for consolidation of two or more 2003 servers to one physical computer), improved Terminal Server functionality for remote access, and a "core" install option for stripped down, specialized server usage.

Exchange 2007, like Server 2008, is a 64-bit platform. This has slowed the introduction of Exchange 2007 as most installs of 2003 Server are 32-bit. As Server 2008 becomes the default network operating system, Exchange 2007 will follow suit. Vista, Server 2008, Exchange 2007 and Office 2007 are all designed to interoperate to provide a seamless computing environment.

Though we recommend our clients upload their notebook computer data to their network whenever they return to the office, this isn't always feasible. Plus, there is often personal data that should be kept local. But what if your notebook was stolen, lost, or the hard drive needed replacing? Would this be an mere inconvenience or a total disaster?

Fortunately, a number of appropriate notebook backup solutions exist. The most popular services, like Carbonite, Data Deposit Box, or Mozy Pro, all work in a similar manner. Upon signing up, all the data on your notebook is copied to the provider's secure servers via a broadband Internet connection. Then, as new files are created or existing ones edited, a background process uploads the new data in real time or on a schedule (based on the service and user options). Depending upon your Internet bandwidth and the volume of data involved, the initial copy may take many minutes or hours. Once the initial backup is made, incremental backups are almost instantaneous.

These services cost anywhere from \$50/year for unlimited service to \$1/GB/Month. Unlike your office backups, archive backups going back years are not maintained and generally restoring data is limited to data lost in the last week or month, but for most users this is more than sufficient. This kind of solution will also work for home PCs, and is much more convenient than tape, CD/DVD, or an external hard drive.

For a number of technical reasons, these services are not appropriate for any but the smallest office environments (Costs, compatibility issues with e-mail systems, need for permanent archives, and restore speeds limited by Internet bandwidth prevent use on larger networks).

Related services you might want to consider are data encrypting in case your notebook should be lost, or a theft recovery service such as CompuTrace.

If you would like to be removed from our email newsletter subscription please send an e-mail to shirlean@lansultants.com.