IT Recommendations on Windows Vista

From **Nathan Robbins** in the Office of Information Technology

If you're still unsure about upgrading to Windows Vista, you're not alone.

Microsoft released the newest version of its Windows operating system in January, and with it came many new features and improvements but also frustrations for some users (see related article, "UM User Reviews Vary").

Advantages of the new system include a completely redesigned user interface, much improved security, a new networking environment, and replacements for legacy applications such as Outlook Express and Windows Address Book.

For the most part, all this adds up to a more pleasant and productive user experience.

Microsoft offers five versions of Vista: Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, Enterprise, and Ultimate.

IT recommends Windows Vista Business for most campus users. This version is available for students through the Microsoft Student Select purchasing program, e-academy, at www.olemiss.edu/computers.

If you require additional data security, we recommend Vista Enterprise or Ultimate.

Before upgrading your current computer to Vista, make sure it meets the minimum system requirements for the version you select. Links to an upgrade advisor and information on the various Vista versions and features may be found on Microsoft's Web site, www.microsoft.com/windows.

We also recommend you check with vendors of any specialized software packages you use to ensure such products are compatible with Vista.

Here is what we know about some applications and how they run (or don't) on Vista:

- If your computer has **Symantec AntiVirus** installed and you plan to upgrade from Windows XP to Vista, you will need to uninstall Symantec before doing so. A Vista-compatible version of Symantec (covered by your existing license) may be installed after the upgrade is complete.

- The **SAP GUI** requires version 7.10 to run on Vista, and any PC running this version (either in Windows Vista or XP) must have patch level one (1) installed before exporting files from SAP to Microsoft Office 2007.

- If using Vista and Internet Explorer 7, you may have problems in **Blackboard** entering text in fields that contain the Visual Text Box Editor, such as discussion board entries, quiz answer fields, and announcements. We recommend you use Firefox 2.0 as your browser for Blackboard if you are on Vista.

- The statistical package, **SAS**, currently does not run on Vista. Version 5.2 and higher of **Mathematica** and **SPSS 15** for Windows are supported for Vista.

- Last month Adobe released **Acrobat** and Reader 8.1 to address issues that prevented the popular PDF application from working well or sometimes at all with Vista.

- The Web-based **VPN** client used on campus is not compatible with Vista, so IT provides a Cisco VPN client that Vista users may install instead. See vpnhelp.olemiss.edu for more information. If you use a departmental VPN connection, contact your network administrator for support with Vista-related issues.

For More INFORMATION

See the IT Helpdesk Web sites:
www.olemiss.edu/helpdesk/vista
www.olemiss.edu/helpdesk/office07

At either site you can register for one or more of the following free sessions to be held in Weir 107:

Monday, July 23

Word 2007	9-11 a.m. or 2-4 p.m.
Intro to Vista	1-2 p.m.

Tuesday, July 24

Excel 2007	9-11 a.m. or 2-4 p.m.
Intro to Vista	1-2 p.m.

Wednesday, July 25

PowerPoint 2007	9-11 a.m. or 2-4 p.m.

UM User Reviews Vary on Vista, Office 2007

Just after Microsoft released Windows Vista, Dr. William Shughart in the Department of Economics installed it on both his two-year-old laptop and his four-year-old desktop.

"I had very few problems with the laptop," Shughart reports, "but the desktop ground away for hours and hours and finally everything went dark, and I couldn't even start it."

Shughart's desktop paid a couple of visits to the IT Helpdesk in Weir Hall before finally running Vista without major problems.

"Since then, I've had a fairly good experience with

Office of Information Technology

Keep Your Computer from Becoming a Legal Liability

By **Donna Gurley** in the Office of the University Attorney

Could the contents of your hard drive become "fair game" in a lawsuit filed against the university?

Recent changes to federal rules governing litigation make it clear that an opposing party can request not only paper documents from the other side, but documents in their "native form" as well. For documents created on a computer, the native form is the actual computer file. These documents must be turned over in their original form, without alterations.
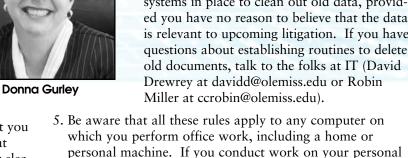
Here are some tips to help you comply with the rules and avoid embarrassing and costly mistakes:

1. Never put in an e-mail something that you would not want to end up as a trial exhibit. When you create an e-mail, you create a permanent document. Before you hit the "send" key, ask yourself if the information would be better shared in a phone conversation or face to face.

2. If you have any reason to believe that someone is considering a lawsuit against the university or against you in your official capacity, notify our office immediately at 915-7014. Lee Tyner or I will help you decide whether electronic documents need to be preserved. We will also help you work with the Office of Information Technology (IT) to preserve relevant documents and get you back to work as soon as possible.

Donna Gurley

3. Once you believe litigation is a possibility, do not attempt to delete or alter documents on your computer!! If the court eventually orders a forensic examination of your computer, even the best hard drive scrubbers leave traces behind. Courts deal harshly with litigants who have attempted to destroy or alter records.

4. Does everyone in your office save old e-mails and files on his or her desktop indefinitely? Decide whether your office should have routine procedures for deleting or purging electronic records. The law permits you to have regular systems in place to clean out old data, provided you have no reason to believe that the data is relevant to upcoming litigation. If you have questions about establishing routines to delete old documents, talk to the folks at IT (David Drewrey at davidd@olemiss.edu or Robin Miller at ccrobin@olemiss.edu).
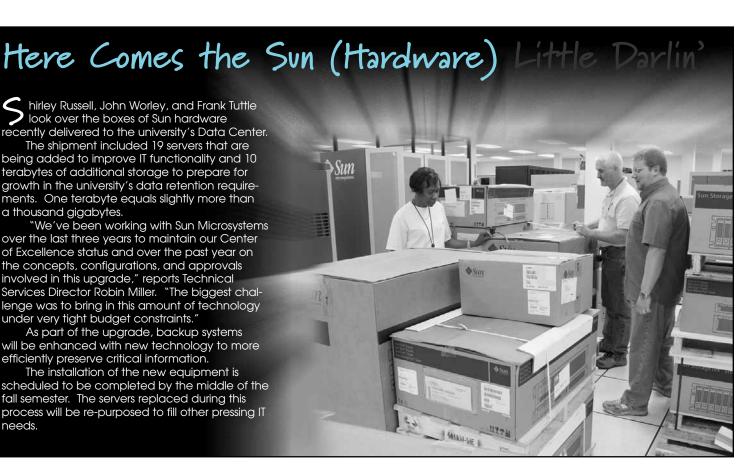
5. Be aware that all these rules apply to any computer on which you perform office work, including a home or personal machine. If you conduct work on your personal computer, you may be required to preserve those records in their original format as well.

If you have additional questions, contact the Office of the University Attorney at 915-7014.

Here Comes the Sun (Hardware) Little Darlin'

Shirley Russell, John Worley, and Frank Tuttle look over the boxes of Sun hardware recently delivered to the university's Data Center.

The shipment included 19 servers that are being added to improve IT functionality and 10 terabytes of additional storage to prepare for growth in the university's data retention requirements. One terabyte equals slightly more than a thousand gigabytes.

"We've been working with Sun Microsystems over the last three years to maintain our Center of Excellence status and over the past year on the concepts, configurations, and approvals involved in this upgrade," reports Technical Services Director Robin Miller. "The biggest challenge was to bring in this amount of technology under very tight budget constraints."

As part of the upgrade, backup systems will be enhanced with new technology to more efficiently preserve critical information.

The installation of the new equipment is scheduled to be completed by the middle of the fall semester. The servers replaced during this process will be re-purposed to fill other pressing IT needs.

Emergency Communications
to Include Text Messaging

In the aftermath of April's tragedy at Virginia Tech, many universities have added notification via text messaging as a way to reach students and employees during emergency situations on campus.

As part of a plan to enhance emergency communications at Ole Miss, the Telecommunications Center is partnering with Cellular South to provide an Emergency Short Message Service.

Provided at no cost by Cellular South, this service will be available by the start of the fall semester. It will be used only for transmitting information related to emergency situations involving public safety and health and inclement weather.

The University of Mississippi began collecting cell phone numbers from students in Fall 2005 by means of a new field on the admissions application. At the same time, a new interface in Online Services gave students a way to add or update their cell phone numbers in university records.

In May of this year, a field for cell phone provider was added to the student interface, and the Office of Human Resources began a parallel effort to collect personal cell phone numbers from employees for use with the emergency text messaging system.

Text messaging will not be the university's only means of communication during a crisis. Other tools will be utilized as well, including e-mail, voice mail, reverse 911, the campus sirens and PA system, messages on cable channel 99, and the dissemination of information through mass media outlets.

To learn more about these important efforts, visit the university's Emergency Information Web site at www.emergency.olemiss.edu.

Assistance is Just a Phone Call Away

Director of Telecommunications David Drewrey wants to remind everyone of the university's automated directory assistance that's been in service for the past three years.

Available at 662-915-8411 (or just 8411 from a campus phone), the service provides phone number listings for university departments, employees, and on-campus students.

When a caller asks for a department, the system first lists the number and then transfers the call. For individuals, it simply transfers the call without listing the number. Faculty and staff should note that only their office phone numbers are connected to the system.

So check it out by calling automated directory assistance and asking for yourself. The listings are updated regularly with information from the offices of Human Resources and Student Housing, so if your phone number is incorrect or not listed, contact the appropriate office to update your records.

For more information, contact the Telecommunications Center at telcom@olemiss.edu.

News from FTDC

By **Penny Rice** in the Faculty Technology Development Center

Academic Technology Enhancement Week Scheduled

Our annual Academic Technology Enhancement Week will take place September 10-14, 2007.

A highlight of the week will be a student panel presentation addressing popular forms of interactive communication, including cell phones and text messaging, and social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, and YouTube.

Other planned workshop topics include Introduction to Blackboard, Using the Blackboard Gradebook, PowerPoint, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Podcasting, Editing Digital Video, Creating DVDs, and more.

These free workshops will be open to all faculty, staff, and graduate instructors. See www.olemiss.edu/ftdc/workshops.html for more information.

Adobe CS3 Software Available

The FTDC now offers Adobe Creative Suite 3 software titles for departmental purchase.

For a complete list of products and pricing information, see www.olemiss.edu/ftdc/software.html.

The FTDC is located in Weir Hall. Please visit, call 915-7918, or e-mail ftdc@olemiss.edu for assistance or more information.

MCSR Symposium Slated for September

From **Jason Hale** in the Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research

The Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research (MCSR) will mark its twentieth year of service by hosting a research symposium on the Ole Miss campus September 6-7, 2007.

The symposium will provide an opportunity for the geographically dispersed members of the MCSR user community to become better acquainted with one another's interests and ongoing projects in computational research and instruction.

Concurrent with this event, corporate trainers from Visual Numerics, Inc. will present workshops on IMSL and PV-WAVE. These sessions are free and open to all interested faculty and students, but only 14 seats are available for each workshop.

To register for the symposium or one of the corporate workshops, or to learn more about IMSL and PV-WAVE, visit www.mcsr.olemiss.edu or e-mail jghale@olemiss.edu.

MCSR | MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR SUPERCOMPUTING RESEARCH

A Parallel Universe

Scott Davis installs Parallels Desktop software on one of the 13 iMac computers in the Mac Teaching Lab in Room 104 of Weir Hall.

The new software allows Davis to maintain the original Mac operating system and also install a fully licensed version of Microsoft's Windows XP as well.

"Mac Lab users will be able to choose whether they want to run the machines as Macs or PCs," explains Davis. "This will be particularly helpful for instruction in topics such as Web design, where it's very useful to have both Mac and PC views of your work."

According to Davis, use of the PC Teaching Lab in Weir 107 has increased greatly in recent years. The upgrade to the Mac Lab now makes it an option for instructors who need PCs but can't get a reservation down the hall.

Visit www.olemiss.edu/ftdc/teachinglab.html for reservations and more information.

UM User Reviews *continued from front cover*

Vista, and I like it a lot," he notes. "The windows come up faster, there's less clutter, the graphics are great, and the games are cooler."

Instead of upgrading an existing computer to Vista, though, Shughart recommends waiting to get a new machine that's pre-loaded with all the necessary drivers and add-ons. That may also give software companies additional time to upgrade their products for Vista compatibility.

"The only real trouble I've had is with existing applications like Adobe Acrobat 8.0 and MathType 5 not working well with Vista," Shughart says.

Dr. Robert Speth in the School of Pharmacy has had software issues with both Vista and Office 2007.

"I had a lot of trouble with Word and Vista working with my Reference Manager Database," Speth explains. "I had a major clash between Word and Reference Manager which led to a complete scrambling of references in a grant proposal which went out with about 15 redundant references."

Network Administrator Randy Allen says that Vista and Office 2007 have presented major challenges for users in the School of Pharmacy.

"As of today, the manufacturer of our firewall still doesn't have a version of their Global VPN client that will work with Vista" Allen comments. "But our bigger problem has actually been Office 2007, since the new menu layout is so radically different from previous versions that it's difficult for some users to learn, and the incompatibility of file formats may be a problem for several years to come."

William Shughart, who is also using Office 2007, finds the new layout to be one of its many improvements.

"It is vastly superior to previous versions of Office," Shughart asserts. "Even if you're still running Windows XP, I would upgrade to Office '07 in a heartbeat."

Office Files:
The Secret to Compatibility

One of the main upgrades in Office 2007 is that it uses an Open XML Format for Excel, Word, and PowerPoint files.

This allows users to exchange data between these applications and enterprise systems using XML and ZIP technologies. Documents are universally accessible, and the risk of damaged files is reduced.

All in all, a very good thing. But if you try to share one of these files with someone using an older version of Office, that person won't be able to open your file.

The file names in the new versions of these applications include an 'x' as part of the extension. You'll see ".docx" or ".pptx" instead of ".doc" or ".ppt" as before.

If you use Office 2000, XP, or 2003, you'll need to download a free compatibility pack to access files saved in the new formats. The pack actually allows you to save in the new formats as well and is available at www.microsoft.com/downloads.

If you've got Office 2007, you can save files you plan to share in the older formats and even set this as your default if desired.

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