



!Mikro Memorandum

An Occasional Newsletter from !Mikro Computer Consulting

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Need a New Computer? Act Now!

Now that the Vista operating system has come out, it is a challenge to figure out what to do if you need a new computer right now.

Currently I am advising clients to buy a system with Windows XP Pro (or Home if that is what works for you) and NOT Vista at this point unless it is a stand alone system with no old hardware attached.



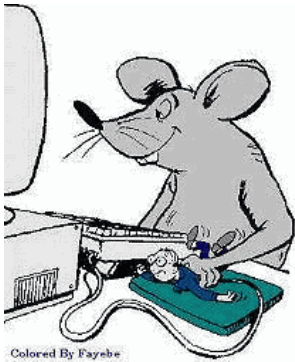
Why?

The most important reason is that if you have an older system now, you will also have older hardware attached to it and also older software running on it. A lot of this hardware; printers, pdas, all-in-one devices, scanners, etc. will not be compatible with Vista, neither will the software. The other important reason is that Microsoft usually takes its own sweet time trying to block all the security holes and other problems that happen when their new operating system is first out.

Where to buy?

You can still get both Dell and HP computers with Windows XP, but act soon. Most of the Dell computers that have an option of one or the other are for the business market only. Most consumer stores like Best Buy or Micro Center only stock Vista. You can also get many recent XP computers at Tigerdirect or Amazon or at other online merchants.

Just make sure that you act soon or be prepared to have to buy new peripherals or new software.



Backup, Backup, Backup!

Backup Options, Part 2

Anything could damage your hard drive at any time and it would be nice if you could quickly get back to work. In a previous newsletter we talked about different ways to backup your data. That is of course the most important thing to do, but wouldn't it be nice if you could recover from a hard drive crash or even just upgrading to a new hard drive without it taking hours and with all your data and settings intact.

There are solutions.

Using products such as Acronis workstation Image and Norton Ghost and Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, you can make a so called image of your hard drive and store it on another drive so that you can quickly restore all your files and settings to a new drive if your hard drive crashes. The Symantec and Acronis products also come in versions for servers.

What do you need?

Hardware

You need an internal or external hard drive as a backup option. Sometimes it makes sense to have a system where you can swap out drives so that one of them can go off site on a rotating basis. These drives are getting quite reasonable these days and you can find a single external hard drive for about \$100 to \$150 depending on the size and make of the drive. For a two drive system, you could get one for as little as \$200.

Software

You also need one of the products mentioned above and install and configure a backup schedule.

That's it. You are on the way to a more secure computing life.

Spyware Revisited

Are you sure you have a working anti spyware program such as the free programs [Ad-Aware](#), [Spy-bot Search and Destroy](#), Grisoft's [AVG](#) anti spyware, Microsoft's Windows Defender or a paid program such as one in the Norton or McAfee security suits or the paid version of the programs above.

Does it run automatically or do you run it every week? The best is to have it set to a scheduled run or run it in the background. If that is not possible, you have to run it every week.

Remember, spyware can change your computer settings, steal your passwords, direct you to advertising, change your browser start page and generally slow down your system. See this instructive [Wikipedia](#) article.

Make sure you are protected against the latest threats and run one of the above mentioned programs at least weekly if it doesn't run on a schedule or automatically.

We Always Knew Computers Have a Mind of Their Own...

