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## Newsletter: Special Windows 7 Edition - July 2009

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### WELCOME!

Dear [subscriber-firstname],

With Windows 7 looming I've put together these resources in this special edition newsletter for anyone wanting to look at upgrading to help you stay informed.

With everything Microsoft, go in with eyes open and do your research!

Our regular September newsletter will be available first week in September!

Virtually yours

*Lyn PB*

*PS: Don't forget: click here if you want to be unsubscribed. If you have a friend/colleague who may be interested in the content of our newsletter pay it forward and forward the newsletter to them.*

### Windows 7 - Which Version Should You Get?
**(By Woody Leonhard - Windows Secrets Issue 206)**

You need to make a few key decisions to ensure that you pick the Windows 7 version that best meets your needs.

It's safe to say the Vista version of Windows didn't set the world on fire, though it inflamed more than a few PC users. It's putting it politely to say there's pent-up demand for Vista's successor, Windows 7.

Before you can determine which of the many versions of Win7 is right for your computing situation, however, you need to know the strengths and weaknesses of each option.

If you know the key decision points, it'll take you just a few minutes to determine which version of Windows 7 is right for you.

One caveat is in order: Nobody who has seen the final "gold code" version of Windows 7 is talking about it. Nor has anyone in a position to discuss it publicly laid eyes on a final upgrade version of Win7. What follows is based on my personal experience with the latest leaked builds.

Let's start with the Win7 versions that we can generally reject without much forethought at all:

- **Starter Edition** comes preinstalled only on netbooks that meet certain restrictions. It has many user-interface limitations __ as befits its rock-bottom price, which is intended to reduce the list price of new netbooks running Windows.

  Starter won't play DVD movies. Hardware makers, however, will undoubtedly bundle DVD software such as

PowerDVD or WinDVD with their optical drives. As an alternative, you could install the highly acclaimed free VLC media player and play movies till the cows come bungee-jumping home.

Bottom line: Starter works fine if you're on a budget. Before you choose that bare-bones edition, however, consider that Win7 Home Premium may be available on a netbook for not much more money than you'd pay for Starter.

- **Ultimate Edition** is for people who have way too much money tearing a hole in their pockets. Avoid this version unless you desperately need the ability to scramble all the data on your hard drive (using MS's proprietary BitLocker) or you want to be able to change your copy of Windows so all of the menus, help files, dialog boxes, and so on appear in a different language (multilanguage support).

  Actually, Ultimate is so expensive, it may be cheaper to buy a second copy of Windows 7 Home Premium in the second language you wish to use and dual-boot between the two versions.

## The big decision is Win7 Home Premium vs. Pro

That brings us to the first of our two key purchase questions: Can you live with Windows 7 Home Premium, or do you really need the added features of Windows 7 Professional? It boils down to whether you're willing to pay the extra money for Premium's handful of extras.

The following items are the things you can do in Windows 7 Pro that you can't do in Windows 7 Home Premium:

Read the rest of this article online here.

### Windows 7 - Should you upgrade?

With Windows 7 looming is it worth upgrading for Office users? Here are some pointers from the Office Watch team:

#### Should you upgrade from Vista?

Windows 7 has much to like however the main advantage of the new Windows is also the main reason not to upgrade.

Windows 7 is a considerable improvement in stability and performance over the complex and clumsy Windows Vista - really more of an improvement than Microsoft is prepared to admit.

And there lies the problem for customers; they are being asked to pay around US$200 (Windows 7 Professional Upgrade) for what amounts to a recanting of Microsoft's previous mistakes with Vista. Is it right for Microsoft to get more money for fixing problems and poor decisions the company made?

#### Should you upgrade from Windows XP?

Windows XP users qualify for the 'upgrade' pricing for Windows 7 but don't get an easy conversion path on their computer.

At first glance it seems that upgrading from Windows XP to Windows 7 would be a good idea on computers with sufficient hardware to take advantage of it.

However there's a catch - Microsoft has NOT provided upgrade software to convert Windows XP to Windows 7. You have to save all your documents and settings from Windows XP, then install a 'clean' Windows 7 operating system. You're then left with the tedium of re-installing all your software and re-configuring both Windows and your software.

The process of 'scrubbing' a computer and starting again from scratch can speed up your computer however it takes time, need to be done carefully and is far too much hassle for many regular computer users.

Moving from Windows XP to Windows 7 involves more than the price you pay to Microsoft; there's a significant cost in your own time and trouble in the changeover.

### MS Uses Patch Channel to Install Firefox Add-On

Reprinted from Windows Secrets Issue 200

It's been widely blogged that Microsoft can silently add an extension to Firefox when users install .NET Framework 3.5 Service Pack 1 and certain other updates.

Microsoft's Assistant 1.0 extension exposes Firefox to any .NET security holes that may be discovered. Even worse, Microsoft wrote the add-in in such a way that its Uninstall button was grayed out and unusable in Firefox.

The extension that MS adds to Firefox implements a technology called ClickOnce. It allows .NET apps to be downloaded and executed within browsers other than Internet Explorer. Unfortunately, this technology can also allow hacked Web

sites to infect PCs.

Many Windows Secrets readers use Firefox because it suffers from fewer security holes than IE - and most people don't need .NET features - so I'm publishing the following steps to remove Assistant 1.0 from Firefox:

**Step 1. Check whether the .NET Framework Assistant is installed.** You may or may not have Assistant 1.0, even if you installed .NET Framework 3.5 SP1, so check this first. In Firefox, pull down the Tools menu and select Add-ons. In the Add-ons dialog box that appears (as shown in Figure 1), if you don't see .NET Framework Assistant, the add-on is not installed. In that case, you don't need to do anything further (except close the dialog box).
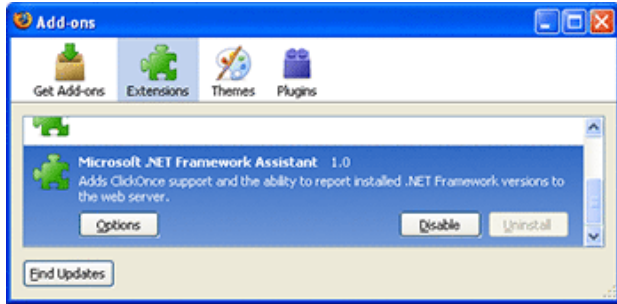


**Figure 1. The Uninstall button is grayed out and unusable due to the way Microsoft implemented the original version of Assistant 1.0.**

**Step 2. Remove or disable the add-on.** If you do find the extension, I recommend that you remove it to reduce your vulnerability to possible security flaws. Choose one of the options shown below.

* **Best option: Install the Microsoft fix.** On May 6, with little publicity, Microsoft posted an update for .NET Framework 3.5 SP1. Installing this update enables Firefox's Uninstall button for the add-on. To install the official update, visit Microsoft's download page.

* **Another option: Temporarily disable the extension.** Using the Add-ons dialog box to disable the extension prevents it from running and protects Firefox from potential security flaws. You might disable the extension instead of uninstalling it if your company insists that you use Firefox to run a .NET app, but you don't wish to be vulnerable when visiting random Web sites. To disable Assistant 1.0 (or any Firefox extension), pull down Firefox's Tools menu and select Add-ons. In the Add-ons dialog box that appears, select the unwanted extension and click the Disable button. Close the dialog box.

* **Not recommended: Edit the Registry.** Before Microsoft's official patch was released, several sites published a procedure to manually delete entries from the Windows Registry to disable the Firefox extension. *I don't recommend this,* because it's easier and safer to use the options shown above. But if you need the full details, .NET Framework product unit manager Brad Abrams posted the Registry procedure in an MSDN blog entry.

**Step 3. Install the third-party extension FFClickOnce, but only if necessary.** If you really need ClickOnce functionality in Firefox, consider installing FFClickOnce, a Mozilla-approved extension developed by James Dobson. This third-party extension poses some of the same risks as Microsoft's add-on. But at least Dobson's extension prevents downloaded apps from running without first making the user click OK twice. For more info, see Dobson's SoftwarePunk site and the extension's Mozilla Add-ons page.


## Lost your Office install disks?

(from Office for Mere Mortals #10.13)

What do you do if you've lost your Office install disks and you need to recover? Most people think the installation disks are the most important part but they're not - the **Product Key** is the most essential thing to find and is often found on a sticker on the CD case. But if you've lost the disk that means you've lost the sticker too! And if you've lost the Product Key you'll have to pay for another copy of Office.

It's worth keeping a copy of the Product Key with your other important documents. Or write it on a sticky label and put it on your PC tower or bottom of your laptop. But this isn't very useful if you haven't kept a copy and you've lost the disks is it? So how can you recover the Product Key?

### Extracting the Product Key

Even though the Product Key isn't displayed, it is hiding on your computer.

There are many programs available to get your MS Office Product Key (in fact many other software keys). Some charge you, which isn't necessary. Some others are of dubious provenance and might have worms or other nasties as well.

For a long time we've used System Info by Gabriel Topala which tells you more details about your computer than most sensible people could ever need to know.

Go to http://www.gtopala.com/ SIW - System Information for Windows, the install keys for Windows, Office and some other programs are displayed. Start SIW (no install required) and click on Software | Licenses.

A list of products, including Windows and Office is displayed with the original Product Keys displayed in full.

Tip: run System Info and save a report before re-installing Windows - it can be a real time saver!

**Getting the Right Install Files**

Once you have your own Product Key, then all you need is the install CD.

Only the Product Key is unique, if you can borrow or copy the matching install files you'll be able to re-install Office.

The trick is 'matching'. You need to get the exact same product install files. An Office Standard CD won't work with an Office Professional Product Key.

It's possible, though this isn't consistent, that the retail install CD is slightly different from the same product sold via an OEM (ie sold with a new computer). Over the years we've had complaints that a borrowed Office install CD won't work and the reason is usually that it's a retail CD with OEM sourced Product Key (or vice-versa). If you're not sure about the retail/OEM status, don't worry, try it anyway.

**Where can you get them?**

Read the rest of this article online here.

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