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| <div data-bbox="444 161 873 344" data-label="Section-Header"> <h1>ANNEX BULLETIN</h1> </div> <div data-bbox="313 420 634 453" data-label="Text"> <p>Annex Bulletin 2007-27</p> </div> <div data-bbox="834 420 1003 455" data-label="Text"> <p>July 4, 2007</p> </div> <div data-bbox="509 497 805 529" data-label="Text"> <p>An <i>OPEN CLIENT</i> edition</p> </div> | <div data-bbox="1190 155 1450 239" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>Recent... HEADLINES</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 283 1438 375" data-label="Text"> <p>Adios, Microsoft Vista! (How I Failed Twice in Trying to Scale Mt. Vista)</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 411 1472 531" data-label="Text"> <p>Burning the Track - Firing on all cylinders, Accenture raises forecast [Annex clients click here]</p> </div> |
| <div data-bbox="480 562 826 602" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>INDUSTRY TRENDS</h2> </div> | <div data-bbox="1190 541 1450 615" data-label="Image"> </div> |
| <div data-bbox="315 646 1002 680" data-label="Text"> <p>Updated 7/10/07, 4:50AM PDT, adds Reader Comment...</p> </div> <div data-bbox="180 720 1131 791" data-label="Text"> <p><i>My Personal Declaration of Independence: Craving a World without Windows</i></p> </div> <div data-bbox="381 835 933 890" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>Adios, Microsoft Vista!</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="238 934 1068 980" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3><i>How I Failed Twice in Trying to Scale Mt. Vista</i></h3> </div> <div data-bbox="141 1016 1130 1054" data-label="Text"> <p>SCOTTSDALE, July 4 - Everywhere you look at PCs these days you see Vista.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="141 1087 966 1226" data-label="Text"> <p>"As of last week, we've had nearly 40 million copies sold, and so that's twice as fast as the adoption of Windows XP, the last major release that we've had," Bill Gates told a Windows Hardware Engineering Conference on May 15.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="980 1087 1161 1314" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="141 1257 959 1358" data-label="Text"> <p>So I figure conservatively that Microsoft may have sold another 10 million Vista licenses since then. That would make it about 50 million by the end of June.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="141 1394 1154 1461" data-label="Text"> <p>A great success story, right? Not with this writer and Microsoft customer. When I see Vista, I see red. And white. And blue... Especially on this Fourth of July.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="141 1495 1170 1631" data-label="Text"> <p>Two unsuccessful efforts in the last two months of trying to scale Mt. Vista have left me bruised and battered. And determined to proclaim my personal Declaration of Independence. Hasta la vista, Microsoft XP? No. Adios y hasta nunca, Ventana Vista! ("See you later, Microsoft XP? No. Adios and goodbye forever, Windows Vista!").</p> </div> <div data-bbox="141 1667 1162 1766" data-label="Text"> <p>Enough is enough. Fifteen years of loyalty ought to be more than sufficient for any vendor. And what did this customer get in return? Mental anguish and suffering. And a colossal waste of time.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="141 1801 1167 1938" data-label="Text"> <p>It seems only natural, therefore, that one should harbor rebellious thoughts and dream of freedom and independence on an Independence Day. My wish this July 4th is for a world without Windows and for an end to Microsoft's choke-hold on the PC industry. Such a dream is no less daunting that was our Founding Fathers' resolution against</p> </div> | <div data-bbox="1229 632 1412 659" data-label="Text"> <p>Also check out...</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1190 659 1450 732" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 772 1464 894" data-label="Text"> <p>New Broom Sweeps Clean - Analysis of CSC's 4Q07 business results [Annex clients click here]</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 930 1472 1050" data-label="Text"> <p>The Last of the (PC) Mohicans - Analysis of Dell's strategy changes; Linux, Wal-Mart</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 1087 1450 1207" data-label="Text"> <p>BRIC by BRIC... to Top Line Growth - Echoes from IBM meeting for fin analysts [Annex clients click here]</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 1243 1417 1362" data-label="Text"> <p>Per Ardua Ad Astra - Analysis of HP's 2Q07 business results [Annex clients click here]</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 1398 1448 1493" data-label="Text"> <p>The Greening of Big Blue - IBM to spend \$1 billion on "going green"</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 1526 1432 1644" data-label="Text"> <p>Are We in "Buyback Bubble?" - Analysis of corporate stock buyback trends</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 1680 1459 1801" data-label="Text"> <p>IBM: Lowering Center of Gravity - Highlights of Partnerworld 2007, with Detailed Reports for clients</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1172 1837 1421 1923" data-label="Text"> <p>Growth Accelerating - Analysis of Capgemini's 1Q07 business results</p> </div> |

George III's oppression and suppression of their freedom. Yet it is even more needed, since Windows is far more ubiquitous today than was the British Empire's grip on the world in 1776.

Toward a World without Windows

"But wait a minute," do I hear some saying? "Fifty million people can't be wrong."

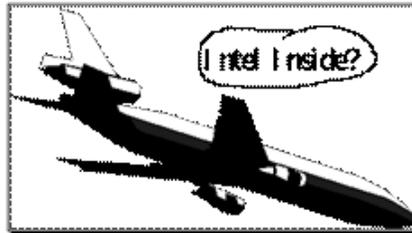
Really? Fifty million people can't be wrong? There nearly 50 million smokers in the U.S. alone; over a billion worldwide. Does that mean they are making wise choices?

But at least they ARE making choices. In the PC business, the hardware vendors are making such decisions for you - by preloading the Microsoft software before shipping them to you. So we, the consumers, get to choose only the hardware chassis, not the engine. It is always Microsoft - Vista being the dominant variety at the moment. Which would not be so bad if it were a really good engine.

Smoking kills five million people worldwide every year. My Windows crashed about five times this weekend alone. If one Windows crash equaled one smoking death, millions of people would be dying every day.

It used to be worse, of course. Older versions of Windows were up and down like toilet seats. Back in 1994, I wrote a story "If PCs Could Fly?" which compared computer crashes with those of airplanes. Here's an excerpt:

"If this writer's PC were an aircraft, it would have crashed no less than 10 times during the last two trips to the East Coast alone! Even cats don't have that many lives to spare... It is a small consolation that some of the crashes were caused by pilot error (i.e., the WINDOWS or other software bugs), not hardware failure. Dead passengers don't care why they died. Only survivors and relatives do!"



In short, large numbers of users of any product prove nothing except that it is not hard to con many people into doing things that are harmful to them. As a 15-year inhaler of bad air that passed through my Windows, I also plead guilty to having succumbed to Microsoft's marketing power. But no longer...

We hold these Truths...



The Declaration of Independence

When in the course of human events...

"When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

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[EDS: On Sunny Side of](#)

The preceding was the opening paragraph of our Founding Fathers' Declaration of Independence. It was followed by another famous quote:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

And happiness, as I see it in the IT world today, is a world without Windows. Here's why...

First Expedition Up Mt. Vista

Ever since a client showed me back in the 1980s what it was like to be on the "bleeding edge of technology," I have preferred to be a follower, rather than a leader when new IT products came out. Based on positive comments I had seen and read about Vista, however, by late April, it seemed the time might have been right to take a crack at it.

So I launched my first expedition up Mt. Vista using a brand new HP tablet notebook as a vehicle. I never even made it to base camp before sending the product back. I could not even transfer the data from my desktop. Vista's "Easy Transfer" software was anything but easy. It simply did not work.

"What a joke; what audacity," I railed, "giving such a piece of crap the 'easy to use' name."

Second Climb Up Mt. Vista

My second attempt to scale Mt. Vista was prompted two weeks ago by a failure of the wireless card on my Toshiba laptop, on a trip to New York. I figured that by now, Microsoft may have exterminated the initial bugs from Vista. So during my next trip (to San Francisco), I placed an order at the Circuit City web site for a Sony VAIO notebook using Vista. I picked up the laptop back home in Scottsdale the following day, marveling at how easy the whole buying process was.

Sadly, that was the only thing easy. I spent the next five days trying to migrate my XP-based desktop applications and data to my new Vista notebook. It took a forklift to do it. Vista's "Easy Transfer" software was still anything but, only a bigger joke now that I anticipated it.

When I called Sony technical support for help, they told me not to use the Easy Transfer. At least not the way Vista was instructing me to. So I searched the web and found that Laplink's PC Mover software promised to do the same thing. I bought it and installed it. It wasn't easy, and it took several hours of work, but it did work. I was able to get my programs and data over from XP to Vista.

So a lesson #1 here... One must never confuse size and quality in the IT business. Bigger is better? Not in the world of software. Microsoft is a \$40 billion (revenue) and \$287 billion (market cap) software behemoth. Laplink is a tiny Washington state company with just five employees in sales and support. Yet its software did what Microsoft mighty Vista could not.

Then some other Vista problems crept up. Like being locked out of my own data files,

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[Capgemini: Longest Sustained Stock Price Rise](#) (An update to "By Leaps and Bounds")

[HP: New King of the Hill](#) (Analysis of HP's fourth quarter business results)

for example. It was supposed to be "for my own good!?" When I asked Sony for help, the tech rep threw up his hands and referred me to Microsoft (so much for PC vendors backing the products they sell "soup to nuts"). And when I called Microsoft, they referred me back to Sony for technical support.

It figures...

My only other choice was to pay Microsoft for support, even though it was for a brand new computer with a brand new Microsoft operating system. Rather than being bounced from pillar to post by the two vendors, I decided to pay for it just to get on with my ascent up Mt. Vista. I was hoping that by the time I reached the summit, the beautiful big sky and promised vistas would be worth the trouble.

I spent an hour with a nice and very knowledgeable Microsoft rep who helped me navigate about some tough Vista corners. I was impressed by the online remote diagnostic tools that Microsoft has developed that allowed its rep to work with me simultaneously on my system as if she were sitting right next to me.

She was also the only support person with whom I had spoken over the course of the five days who did not have an Indian accent. That's no small matter. First, the software does not work properly. Then you have trouble trying to understand the person who is supposed to be helping you. And who can be sometimes wrong, too, as I have discovered.

This became evident during the futile effort to import the Outlook Express settings and messages from XP to Vista. Why Microsoft decided to make its two e-mail packages incompatible (Outlook Express and Windows Mail) is simply baffling. Maybe it was hoping that users would Outlook? (which is a part of its Office 2007). But having tried and dumped the Outlook two years ago, this writer certainly wasn't about to go backward while trying to move forward and up Mt. Vista.

Bottom line? The only thing of which you can be certain when you call Microsoft tech support is a serious waste of time. At least in my experience. I have spent a total of over six hours with four different tech reps over the course of three days before finally throwing in the towel and sending the Sony notebook back the way I did HP's two months earlier. Again, nothing wrong with Sony hardware. It's the Vista engine that sputtered.

Adding insult to injury, Circuit City charged me a \$187 "restocking fee" when I returned the laptop. Never mind that they KNEW the Outlook Express was not compatible with Vista when they sold me the system (at least the store manager did), yet had failed to warn me. Earlier this year, I had a similar experience at Best Buy (with a different product).

So a lesson #2 here... Forget the stores. Buy directly from manufacturers online. Stores add no value except to be able to pick up a system quickly. If you order directly from a PC maker, at least you'll only have one company to deal with. And there will be no "restocking fee" if you return the product.

What To Do?

So given that the PC makers choose the engine for you, which means at the moment

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[Power of Manpower \(While others move to India, Russia... AMD invests in New York, hailing "phenomenal" quality of its](#)

that nearly all new PCs come with Vista, what is one to do to avoid the pitfalls of my two unsuccessful efforts to scale Mt. Vista?

Do Nothing. Well, doing nothing is not a bad choice. Unless you have a pressing reason for having to buy a new system (such as the wireless hardware failure in my case), maybe you should wait for a while to see what will happen if more people send their PCs back as yours truly did. Who knows... maybe there will be enough of them to clog up the channels and cause the PC makers to rethink their "do as Big Brother says"-Vista strategy?

Buy XP. Dell, for example, did a partial turn about face back in April, when it started to offer XP on some of its models. HP is now also doing it, as is Toshiba.

But you are unlikely to find any new notebooks with XP in stores. At least not in four different brands of stores that I have sampled (Officemax, Circuit City, Walmart, Best Buy). Besides, that would be a step back technologically. So I would only recommend it to those who are in dire needs of a new system and are in a hurry to get it.

Be Brave; Get a Mac. Luckily, there is a third alternative, however radical it may seem at a first glance. Be brave, get a Mac. Apple's Mac. Yes, it is an entirely different engine. And yes, it is more expensive. And true enough, the new iPhone and iPod have diverted some of Apple's resources from computers to these immensely popular handheld devices. And there is likely going to be some pain in converting from Windows to Mac OS. But I would be surprised if it is anything close to the pain and suffering that I have endured during the 15 years of being a Microsoft customer. Anyway, I am willing to chance it.



Also, there are some benefits downstream from breaking away from the Microsoft shackles... as my Declaration of Independence proclaimed above. Like the new [Safari](#) browser, for example, the fastest browser running on Windows. It renders web pages up to twice as fast as the Internet Explorer 7, and up to 1.6 times faster than the Firefox 2, according to Apple.



"We think Windows users are going to be really impressed when they see how fast and intuitive web browsing can be with Safari," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "Hundreds of millions of Windows users already use iTunes, and we look forward to turning them on to Safari's superior browsing experience too."

So off to the Apple store I go. "An apple a day keeps doctors away?" I just pray "an Apple a day keeps Microsoft at bay." Wish me luck.

Happy Fourth!

Happy bargain hunting!

Bob Djurdjevic

P.S. If you want me to share with you my Apple Mac experiences, too, do let me know by [CLICKING HERE](#) and sending me a personal message. Just keep in mind that it may not happen for several months, as I have a heavy travel schedule ahead, starting with

labor force)

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[Go East, Young Man!](#) *(A speech delivered in St. Petersburg, Russia, May 25, 2006; [click here for slides](#))*

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[Octathlon 2006: Accenture Again Wins "Gold!"](#) *(HP gets "Silver," IBM "bronze")* [[Annex clients click here](#)]



another trip around the world in a couple of days. But I do promise to return to this subject before the year end.

READER COMMENT: A Reverse Journey - From Mac to PC

PARIS, France, July 10 - As you know, we don't have a "letters to the editor" section. But the comments that poured in from our readers right after the publication of the above "[Adios, Microsoft Vista](#)" piece suggested that perhaps we should consider it. So we have selected one of the letters because it is particularly poignant and different from all others. This reader, a journalist from Ohio, has actually gone the other way - from Apple Mac to Windows XP. So we thought her experience and opinions would be worth sharing...

Hello, Bob, I try to resist the urge to clog up your "Inbox" by chiming in on all your e-mails, but I just couldn't help myself with your declaration of independence -- one of those priceless missives that both entertain and enlighten. Ah, the goal of the true journalist!!

Anyway, I made a kind of reverse transition -- from Mac to PC. I have been a Mac freak since the eighties when they came out with desktop publishing. I've had and used virtually every incarnation of Mac since they came out with their first little box. Like most Mac freaks, I defended the name and the technology to the hilt. I came to a dead-end, however, when Mac went to its OS10, which was a vast departure from the 7, 8 and 9's I had. As much as hassle avoidance, it became an economic issue, since I really couldn't justify upgrading all software.

Simultaneously, the increased threat of viruses and the dire warnings of entire hard drives being "eaten" (put out I suspect by the techies at places like Norton etc) began to work on me, even though I knew that Macs are not typically susceptible to viruses. That, coupled with growing ridicule of my Mac addiction, led me to purchase a Toshiba laptop equipped with Windows XP. I lug it literally anywhere and use it for little more than e-mail communication. I rashly proclaim that if my hard drive is "eaten" or "infected" so what. BTW, I realize this sort of rationale won't work for you.

Although I have been intrigued by Vista, I can't justify making the jump. The nightmare transition issues have turned me off as well -- sort of like volunteering for torture. Yuk!

When one makes the transition (file transfers, but more importantly the software programs they are written on), most of the software, particularly specialty business programs, will not transfer peacefully. Worse, you are rarely forewarned of any of the myriad conflicts that are likely to occur. I'm sure you are much more conversant with all of this than I.

As you said, forget the big box store clerks, and if you do make the jump to Mac, that will apply doubly. The latest operating system I have on any Mac is OS9, and I have not even ventured into the Vista jungle with XP being the latest operating system I have on a pc. I think I even have an IBM pc that probably has Windows 98 on it and can remember using old DOS-based pc's.

Alas, I have found that "help desk" or "customer support" are oxymorons in the best sense of the word, and that unfortunately applies to virtually every realm. The last looney I tried in vain to deal with threatened to "put down that I was rude." Wow, what a threat!! I usually mutter something like, "can I put down that you were incompetent?"

I guess the bottom line is that it depends on what you're trying to accomplish. The Mac browser (Safari) is pretty impressive, as long as it doesn't create other problems that may be critical to you, while irrelevant to others. I just heard on the news that Microsoft has found huge hardware issues with its latest X-Box. Whew,

thankfully I don't have to be concerned with that.

I sometimes think that Billy Boy (Gates that is) should stop trying so hard to dissipate his guilt over being so wealthy by frittering away huge sums of his vast fortune on the latest "feel-good" liberal cause, and start getting a (re)grip on his old core business. I doubt he even suspects how far afield Microsoft has moved from its moorings. But on second thought, I doubt he cares. (Do I hear political overtones here?)

I will await the next installment of your computer travails, although I realize with your other more pressing commitments, it may not be too soon. Could that be a clue as to how they all seem to be getting away with what seems to be "business as usual" today?

Best regards,
Diane Bernish
Kent, Ohio

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